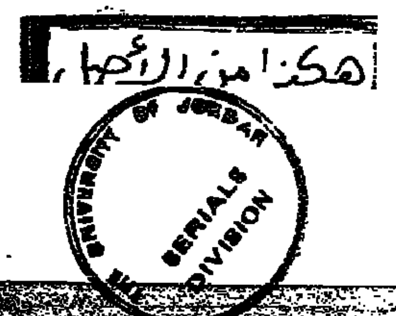


President Off to Boushehr Province

Tehran Times Service

TEHRAN — President Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani left here for Boushehr Province today to inaugurate 640 infrastructural and development projects which cost 4,000 billion rials.

Boushehr International Airport Terminal, the Center for Classifying Parcels, are among other projects to be inaugurated during the president visit to the province. (Contd on Pg. 14)

TEHRAN TIMES

4-Page Special Issue Inside

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Security Pact Eludes Arab States

CAIRO – An Arab League committee has failed to agree on a security and cooperation pact aimed at preventing crises such as the 1990 Iraqi invasion of Kuwait, officials said Wednesday.

"Objections were raised by Arab states to various points of the project, including the name of the pact, blocking a reconciliation formula," an Arab delegate told AFP. (Contd on Pg. 14)

7th Meeting of ECO Regional Planning Council Opens

Tehran Times Service

TEHRAN — The seventh meeting of the regional planning council of the Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO) opened in Tehran on Wednesday with the participation of representatives from Pakistan, Afghanistan, Turkey, Islamic Republic of Iran, Turkmenistan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan and Azerbaijan.



In his inaugural address, the Iranian Vice-President and head of Plan and Budget Organization (PBO), Hamid Mirzadeh, emphasized that participation of all ECO members in such meetings would prepare the ground for their further regional cooperation.

He added that the determination of ECO members to strengthen multi-faceted cooperation in the (Contd on Pg. 14)

Israel Approves New Jewish Settlements

BAIT-UL-MOQADDAS – The Israeli government approved Wednesday the building of a new Jewish neighborhood in East Bait-ul-Moqaddas, which Palestinians have warned will spark violent protests, officials said.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu chaired a ministerial meeting in Bait-ul-Moqaddas which gave the green light for the construction project.

Israel will push ahead with a controversial plan to build new Jewish homes in annexed East Bait-ul-Moqaddas. Foreign Minister David Levy said Wednesday, warning the international community not to interfere.

Winding up a three-day visit to Beijing, during which he discussed the status of the Middle East peace process with senior Chinese leaders, Levy brushed aside Palestinian protests against the construction plans.

(Contd on Pg. 14)

President Recommends Impartiality in Presidential Elections



TEHRAN — President Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani here on Wednesday recommended the Interior Ministry officials to exercise impartiality in the presidential elections slated for May 23.

In a meeting with Minister of the Interior Ali Mohammad Besharati, governor generals of the provinces and the executive directors of the Interior Ministry, the president said the Islamic Republic of Iran is of popular nature and the effective role of every individual in the victory of the Islamic Revolution, in the course of eight-year Iraqi imposed war (1980-1988) and the construction era are indicative of the people's presence at the scene and according to the constitution the votes of the people are the criteria for the good of the Islamic Republic of Iran. (Contd on Pg 14)

Zionist Soldier Shooting, Choking Palestinian to Death

HIZMEH, West Bank – Palestinians here Wednesday accused Israeli agents of beating and choking to death a man who had come to the aide of a neighbor the soldiers



Bait-ul-Moqaddas (Feb. 25): A veiled Palestinian woman tries to comfort the children of Mohammed Abdel Aziz Abu Halawi, a Palestinian who was killed by Israeli soldiers.

(AFP PHOTO)

CORRECTION

In our yesterday's issue, dated Feb. 26, in the Mostaz'afan and Janbazan Foundation's advertisement on page 1, the figure '6.5 tons' should be read '6.5 million tons.' The mistake is regretted.

Editor

1st Phase of TPC Becomes Operational

By F. Dada

TABRIZ – On the occasion of the 18th anniversary of the victory of the Islamic Revolution, the first phase of the gigantic Tabriz Petrochemical Complex (TPC) came on stream.



The TPC Managing Director Abbas Sedqi, at a press conference here yesterday, cited the reasons for establishing the complex as to achieve self-sufficiency in producing petrochemicals, to activate the country's plastic and tire industries, to meet the needs of the domestic markets, to create job opportunities, to prevent the out- (Contd on Pg. 14)

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In the Name of God

And if they intend to deceive you—then surely Allah is sufficient for you; He it is Who strengthened you with His help and with the believers.

(HOLY QORAN) (8:62)

OPINION

Infrastructural Projects Promising Bright Economic Prospects

Implementing the construction and development projects one after another, the Islamic Republic of Iran is making great strides in accomplishing its economic objectives. It currently exports $15 million worth of electricity to the neighboring countries including Turkey and Azerbaijan (the Autonomous Republic of Nakhichevan). Besides, Iran and Armenia are to join their electricity grids next week in a move to ease Armenia's power shortage. Iran has also the capacity to export energy to Afghanistan and Pakistan.

Also, the news about inauguration of different infrastructural projects such as the first phase of Tabriz Petrochemical complex promises bright prospects for the Iranian economy. When its second phase comes into operation in April, Tabriz petrochemical complex will be able to produce 500,000 tones of petrochemicals needed for the country's tire and plastic industries.

In fact, such projects will not only help to promote different industries in the country, but they will also create more job opportunities for the youth and save the country a great amount of hard currency.

The implementation of the different social, cultural and economic development projects within the framework of the 5-Year Development Plans, the second of which is presently under way, indicates the great importance attached by the Iranian executives and officials to the construction of the country and its economic and industrial development in the postwar era. However, it should be noted that the projects which have come on stream so far due to the Five-Year Development Plans require time to become lucrative, decrease inflation and raise the domestic production capacity. Their products can meet the domestic needs, and the surplus can be exported to bring the country hard currency.

Given that natural resources form the foundation of production, the Islamic Republic of Iran, with plentiful natural reserves and sources of energy, is fortunately facing no barriers to turning into a major exporter and a developed nation. Increasing the production of petrochemicals is a major step towards the country's industrial development.

It is hoped that the Second Five Year Development Plan and the similar ones carried out by the next Iranian president will turn Iran into a model country, in the region and on the international level.

Indian Scholars: Attack on Iranian Center Anti-Islamic

Tehran Times Service

TEHRAN — The terrorist attack on Iran's Cultural Center in Multan, Punjab Province, is a part of imperialist Zionist plots against Islam, renowned Islamic scholars of India, prominent to both Shia and Sunni sects of Islam said on Wednesday.

The attacks aimed at tarnishing the positive impact of the Islamic Revolution of Iran on unity among Muslims over the world, said Maulana Aghil al-Garavi, principal of the Madrasa Jamiatul Saqlein, New Delhi, Maulana Mufti Mukarram, imam (prayer leader) of Fatehpuri Mosque, Delhi, and Maulana Zeshan Hidayati a renowned Islamic scholar at a press conference in New Delhi Wednesday.

Maulana Aghil al-Garavi told IRNA that Indian Muslims condemned the attack on Iran's Culture House in Multan and refuse to let such terrorist activities in Pakistan affect the unity between Shias and Sunnis in the country.

Maulana Mukarram said that the attack against the Iranian Culture House is anti-Islamic. It was just a handywork of Zionist imperialist forces.

Maulana Zeshan said that engineering such attacks, the U.S. and Israel wanted to portray Muslims as terrorists.

They appealed to the world Muslim community to maintain harmony and guard against the U.S.-Israeli design to create discord among them.



Interior Ministry Officials Call On Speaker, Judiciary Chief

Tehran Times Service

TEHRAN — Interior Minister Ali Mohammad Besharati, governor-generals of the Iranian provinces and executive directors of the Interior Ministry met separately with Majlis Speaker Hojjatoleslam Ali Akbar Nateq Nouri and head of the Judiciary Ayatollah Mohammad Yazdi on Wednesday.

In their meeting with the speaker, Hojjatoleslam Nateq Nouri underlined that the governor-generals shoulder a heavy responsibility and a hard task in view of the next presidential elections slated for May 23.

He noted that the country's officials should spare no effort to properly hold the seventh presidential elections so as to frustrate the enemies' plots.

He also put emphasis on maintaining complete security during the polls and creating a feeling of trust in the presidential candidates and called on the executives in charge of holding the elections to remain impartial.

"The next president should follow President Rafsanjani's policies on construction and continue with the Five-Year Development Plans," he added.

During the Interior Ministry officials' meeting with the Judiciary chief, Ayatollah Yazdi stressed that the executive officials are not entitled to impose their personal attitudes toward any specific candidate on the public.

He also noted that the massive participation of the people in the forthcoming elections would further strengthen the Islamic system.



TEHRAN (Feb. 26) — Majlis Speaker Nateq Nouri addresses the Interior Ministry officials.

Boroujerdi Calls On Bangladeshi Ranking Officials

Tehran Times Service

TEHRAN — Tehran-Dhaka bilateral relations as well as the latest regional developments were discussed in a meeting between Iranian Deputy Foreign Minister for Asia-Pacific Affairs, Alaeddin Boroujerdi and Bangladeshi Foreign Minister Abd-us-Samad Azad in Dhaka Wednesday.

In the meeting the Bangladeshi



minister expressed satisfaction over growing trend of the two countries' cooperation, saying that Bangladesh is willing to further expand bilateral relations with Iran.

The Iranian deputy foreign minister underlined the improvement of relations between the two Muslim countries, saying that the agreements already reached during the visit of President Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani to Dhaka are under implementation.

Presenting a report on political situation in Afghanistan, Persian Gulf and Central Asia, Boroujerdi said that the Islamic Republic of Iran is seriously pursuing the settlement of crisis in the region.

The Iranian senior official held another meeting on Tuesday with the Bangladeshi deputy foreign minister. In the meeting, the two sides reached interim agreements on building a joint oil refinery with the investment of third nations, and establishing air service between Tehran and Dhaka.

Iran and Bangladesh have also agreed on operating a shipping service between the two countries which is expected to be finalized in a visit to Tehran by the roads minister of Bangladesh later on.

Among other interim agreements arrived at between negotiating teams of the two countries was one for Iran's supplying of railway cars to Bangladesh.

The Iranian side in the talks also included ranking delegates from the ministries of finance and economy, energy, plan and budget organization, electricity, commerce, and from the Iranian state railway and airline.

Tremor Jolts Shirvan

Tehran Times Service

TEHRAN — The Seismological Base of Kermanshah, said that a tremor measuring 3.4 degrees on the open-ended Richter scale jolted the city of Shirvan Chardavol in the western province of Ilam at 21:12 hours local time on Tuesday.

The base affiliated to the Geophysics Center of Tehran University registered the epicenter of the quake 95 km southwest of the base, in the vicinity of Shirvan Chardavol.

According to IRNA, no report has been received on loss of life or damage to property.

Iranian Delegation Due in Islamabad to Probe Attack on Iran's Cultural Center

Tehran Times Service

TEHRAN — An Iranian delegation, headed by Deputy Foreign Minister for Communications Morteza Sarmadi, is expected to arrive in Islamabad on Saturday, March 1, to probe into the terrorist attack on the Iranian Cultural Center in the city of Multan.

On February 2, seven persons including the head of Iran's Culture Center in Multan, Punjab Province, were shot dead by a group of intruding armed terrorists.

Sarmadi will also hold meetings with top Pakistani officials on the incident, IRNA reported.

Iran has blamed the global arrogance for the attack and urged Pakistan to be more cautious on the protection of its diplomatic missions. The Islamic Republic has also called for arrest of the assassins.

Political as well as social and religious circles of Pakistan condemned the incident as an imperialist conspiracy to harm brotherly relations between the islamic states.

They urged the Pakistani government for early arrest and punishment of the culprits.

News reports Wednesday said that Pakistani police has arrested seven people in connection with the terrorist attack.

New Pak FM Vows to Upgrade Relations With China, Iran

Tehran Times Service

TEHRAN — Pakistan would improve relations with its traditional close friends, China and Iran, IRNA quoted the newly-appointed Foreign Minister of Pakistan Gohar Ayub Khan as saying.

Talking to reporters soon after his taking oath as foreign minister on Tuesday, he said that a special diplomatic emphasis will be put on the countries which could help Pakistan on the issues of Kashmir and Afghanistan.

Political circles had been severely criticizing the government of former Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto for losing support of Pakistan's traditional friends, China and Iran. During the Bhutto government, domestic circles evaluated low the diplomatic ties of Pakistan with the said countries.

Gohar Ayub is an old parliamentarian and remained speaker of the National Assembly of Pakistan during Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif's first tenure from 1990 to 1993.

He was introduced by Nawaz Sharif as foreign minister and took oath of his office Tuesday night.

Nawaz Sharif took rule of the country after the February 3 election in which his Pakistan Muslim League got a landslide victory.

He took oath as prime minister on February 17 and introduced a seven-member federal cabinet Tuesday night.

The foreign minister said that his ministry needs complete revamping and restructuring at all levels. He said that due to the incompetence of the previous government, Pakistan's relations with outside world have deteriorated.

UNESCO to Help Reconstruct Iqbal Lahori Library

Tehran Times Service

TEHRAN — The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) in Paris Tuesday announced its readiness to help rebuild Iran's Iqbal Lahori Library in Pakistan, an IRNA report said.

The library was attacked by members of a terrorist group a month ago. Thousands of books including rare copies of the Holy Qoran and other religious books were burnt in the attack.

In a statement issued in Paris, Iran's Permanent Representative to Paris said that while expressing their regret over the incident, the UNESCO officials have voiced their readiness to provide all-out aid to reconstruct the cultural center.

According to the statement, UNESCO's readiness was announced following a message sent by Iran's Minister of Culture and Islamic Guidance Mostafa Mirsalim to the director general of the organization.

Outgoing Spanish Ambassador Calls On President

Tehran Times Service

TEHRAN — The outgoing Spanish Ambassador to Iran, Fernando Jose Belloso, bid farewell to President Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani here on Tuesday.

Belloso, the second oldest serving ambassador after his Syrian counterpart in Tehran, said that relations between the Islamic Republic of Iran and this country was at a favorable level, IRNA reported.



Int'l Seminar on Presence of Women in Contemporary Cinema Winds Up Work



Photo: Abbas Kowsari

Tehran Times Service

TEHRAN — The First International Seminar on the Presence of Women in Contemporary Cinema wound up work yesterday, issuing a joint statement on the status of women.

After recitation of some verses from the holy Qoran, Head of the Islamic Propagation Organization's Art Department, Hojjatoleslam Zam welcomed the guests and elaborated on the status of women in the Iranian cinema.

Drawing a comparison between the Iranian cinema and Western cinema, the hojjatoleslam said: "Iranian women owe much to the Islamic Revolution on realizing the true personality of women."

Hojjatoleslam Zam said before the Islamic Revolution women were used as commodity and a means of publicity.

Zam added that with the culmination of the Islamic Revolution, however, women enjoyed a meaningful personality.

He underlined the presence of women in outdoor activities, especially cinematic activities, and said this seminar is indicative of the importance the Islamic Republic of Iran attaches to the status of women in society.

"Our cinema, however, has not fully met the real values of an Islamic cinema", Hojjatoleslam Zam said.

He alluded to the status of women in the course of history and said women have always been paid due attention whenever and wherever Islam was dominant.

Hojjatoleslam Zam criticized misuse of women in Western cinema and said women's creativity in cinema does not count in the West, adding that what is important is her beauty and body.

The seminar finally declared that today women's problems are not limited to a single stratum of society but as the issue that impacts society as a whole.

The declaration underlined the fundamental role of women in the process of economic, social, cultural and political renewal and reconstruction of societies.

It further underscored the preservation of traditional, cultural and historical heritage apart from its religious values, playing an essential role in supporting families and maintaining the foundation of societies.

Elsewhere the declaration said women participation in the present trend of development is necessary and women should make use of all physical and moral resources to play their important role in cultural, social, economic and political grounds.

In the current situation, the main cause of women problems goes to the lack of knowledge, insight or a low level of literacy in such a way that more than 50 percent of women population are illiterate so that they are trapped at wrong beliefs and misleading tendencies, the declaration said.

The declaration further said that constant presentation of negative and offensive images of women in mass media like cinema has a bad effect on women and their contribution in society.

In our opinion, the final goal of human development is the elevation of all human beings and to this end the use of women as the hobby and charm of business advertisements and its limitation to portraying stereotype roles harm the constructive and positive role in the process of social development, the declaration stressed.

The declaration concluded by calling on cinema industry in UNESCO, governmental and non-governmental organizations at national, regional and international levels to provide practical solutions to the present state of women in cinema activities and presentation of their image through it.

Iran's Legitimate Stand Can Be Presented to World Through Cinema

Tehran Times Service

TEHRAN — Presidential advisor in charge of women's affairs, Ms. Shahla Habibi, here Tuesday lauded holding of the Seminar on the Presence of Women in Contemporary Cinema and descried it as a good initiative.

Ms. Habibi added that Iran's legitimate stand can be presented to the world through cinema.

Speaking to IRNA on the sidelines of the conference which opened at Tehran's Azadi Hotel on Monday, she called on the organizers of the seminar to pave the way for greater dialog with foreign film makers and reflect the viewpoints of the Islamic Republic of Iran.

She called for establishing closer contacts between the ulema and scholars with those in film business. Ulema should keep channels of communication open with those who have the most influential weapon, cinema, in their possession.

As for observation of Islamic principles including Hejab (Islamic code of dress) in cinema, she said the hejab is emphasized in Islam but unfortunately there are instances in the cinema where the Islamic principles are neglected.

Taleban Investigate Two French Men Over Islamic Violations

KABUL — Two Frenchmen arrested by the Taleban authorities in Kabul are under investigation for committing at least six violations to Islamic law, an official said Wednesday.

"If they have not (committed violations) they will be exonerated. If they have, they will be dealt with according to Islamic Shariat," declared Attorney-General Maulavi Jalilullah Maulawizada.

He doubted the death penalty would apply, as the case stood at present, but said further investigation was needed and it was up to the Supreme Court to pass the final verdict and punishment.

The case against the two Frenchmen, employed as aid workers by Action Contre La Faim (ACF), has highlighted the Taleban's ultra-strict enforcement of Islamic law, or Shariat.

The two were arrested last Saturday when Taleban raided an ACF guest house where a farewell lunch for three female expatriate ACF employees was attended by ACF female staff.

Although the two Frenchmen were in the ACF compound, they did not attend the lunch but had retired to another building, according to other foreign aid workers in Kabul.

The Taleban attorney-general said the alleged violations by Frederic Michel and Jose Daniel Llorente "are many", and added that they "have admitted" to some of them.

(AFP)

3,840 Afghan Students Enrolled in Literacy Classes by Iran

Tehran Times Service

ZAHEDAN — About 3,840 Afghan learners, most of them below 15, are learning at literacy campaign classes set up in Bamian Province of Afghanistan by Iranian government, an IRNA report said.

Iranian consul in Bamian Alierza Rajaee told IRNA Tuesday that the literacy movement authority of Iran had established as many as 120 elementary education classes in 24 villages of the Afghan province. 90 per cent of the people in Bamian Province of Afghanistan are unlettered.

Meanwhile, Esman of Wahdat Eslami Party of Afghanistan Jowhari said in Bamian Tuesday that Afghans owed the introduction of elementary education for school age children in that province solely to the Islamic Republic which, he said, had offeed the project for the first time in that province.

Larijani Elaborates on Imperialists' Anti-Iran Program

Tehran Times Service

TEHRAN — Vice-Chairman of Foreign Policy Commission of the Majlis, Mohammad Javad Larijani, here Wednesday said that the U.S. policy in the region consists of containment of Iran, overthrow the Iraqi regime and provide a foothold for the Zionist entity to protect the U.S. interests in the region.

Addressing the gathering of the 5th Mjalis Hezbollah (party of God) Tuesday, Larijani said the U.S. has failed in achieving these three objectives.

He elaborated on the axis around which the American policy towards Iran revolves and said the U.S. primarily attempts to isolate Iran politically, a fact that the U.S. president officially announced at the Congress.

Larijani added the second axis of U.S. policy is to put economic pressure on Iran to hamper the pace of development in Iran. He said the third axis involves military pressure on Iran.

He said the U.S. works to inculcate the idea into the regional states that they are constantly exposed to military threat. The fourth axis of U.S. policy, Larijani said, is to employ domestic opposition to achieve its ends.

Larijani added that as the fifth axis the U.S. attempts to muster propaganda support for the U.S. ploys. He said the U.S. administration has allocated $76 million to run and expand a Persian language audio-visual channel to discredit Iran in the eyes of international community.

Larijani, who is also Head of the Majlis Research Center, said that imperialist-run media are sensitive to institutionalization of the Islamic system and to the growing influence of the leadership of the Islamic Revolution.

President Rafsanjani Cables Message to Turkish Counterpart

Tehran Times Service

TEHRAN — President Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani cabled a message to Turkish President, Suleyman Demirel, thanking his Turkish counterpart for congradulating Rafsanjani on the anniversary of the victory of the Islamic Revolution.

According to Anatolia News Agency, the message of president Rafsanjani to Turkish president stressed the continuation and expansion of mutual and international cooperation between the two countries.

Part of the message reads that the Islamic Republic of Iran has proudly left behind mountain of plots emerging victorious and is now engaged in construction efforts and working for establishment of peace and justice in the region.

Japan Supports Policy of Dialog With Iran

Tehran Times Service

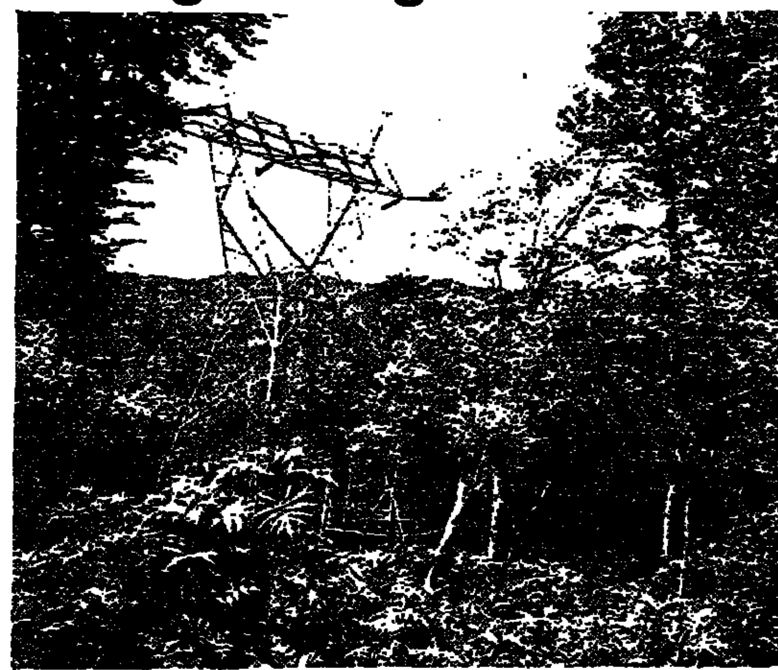
TEHRAN — Japan's Prime Minister told Oman's deputy foreign minister that Tokyo supports the policy of dialog with the Islamic Republic of Iran.

The Japanese prime minister said that this can contribute to fulfilment of the demands of international community.

Oman's deputy foreign minister has told the Japanese prime minister that the policy of isolating Iran is wrong.

هكذا من الأصل

Iran Exports Electricity to Neighboring Countries



Tehran Times Service

TEHRAN - The Islamic Republic of Iran exports some $15 million worth of electricity to Turkey and Azerbaijan Republic (the autonomous Republic of Nakhichevan), it was announced here Tuesday.

According to Bahman Masoudi, Deputy for Planning of the Power Generation and Transmission Company (Tavanir) this means that Iran is exporting some 20-30 megawatts of electricity to Turkey and 30-40 megawatts to Nakhichevan.

He told IRNA that the company is also connecting Iran's power networks of 230 kilo volts to Armenia and of 400 kilo volts to Turkmenistan.

Meanwhile, Iran is exporting electricity to Turkey by connecting its 154-kilo volt network, due to be increased to 400 kv in the future, by which the export of electricity to that country will amount to 200-300 megawatts, Masoudi noted.

In case of requests made by Pakistan and Afghanistan, Iran could have the capacity to also link its electricity networks to the networks of these two countries within the shortest possible time, he pointed out.

Minister Meets Syrian Prime Minister

Tehran Times Service

TEHRAN - Syrian Prime Minister, Mahmoud az-Zoubi Tuesday stressed that Tehran-Damascus friendly ties can be considered as a good model for other regional states.

Making the remark in a meeting in Damascus with Iran's Minister of Housing and Urban Development Abbas Ahmad Akhoundi, he noted that the prospect for the two countries' future relations is very bright, IRNA reported.

The Iranian delegation comprising some 30 economic and technical experts and officials of various companies led by Akhoundi arrived in Syria on Thursday to attend the joint economic commission of the two countries.

Different agreements in various fields were reached between the two sides in the past few days.

Iran, Ukraine Agreed to Expand Ties

Tehran Times Service

TEHRAN - Deputy Foreign Minister of Ukraine Konstantin Gryschenko told Interfax Tuesday that Iran and his country had agreed to broaden their industrial cooperation.

Agreements in that area, he said, was reached between him and Iranian officials during his visit to Tehran last week.

He said his government was likely to sign a $-100-million worth contract for purchasing oil from Iran.

According to the Ukrainian official, Ukrainian manufacturers Okresessory and Okraspet Smotazhestrovy had also discussed details of a plan for supplying hydro-power plants to Iran the cost of which to, be paid partly in cash and in part by barter trade between the two countries.

Hormuzgan Exports 5.148 Tons of Commodities

Tehran Times Service

TEHRAN - Some 5,148 tons of various non-oil products, worth over Rls 4.54 billion, were exported from Hormuzgan province in the past one month, it was announced Wednesday.

Asadollah Amir-Arjmand, director general of the provincial institute for standard and industrial research added that pomegranate, apple, fig, almond, walnut, raisin, garlic, construction materials and gas cookers were among major items exported to Ukraine, Germany, China, Britain, Bangladesh, Cameroon, Madagascar, Malaysia, India and the United Arab Emirates (UAE).

Indo-Iran-Turkmen Pact to Enhance Economic Cooperation

Tehran Times Service

TEHRAN - India's External Affairs Minister I.K. Gujral yesterday said the recent trilateral agreement on international transit of goods between India, Iran and Turkmenistan will be a key element in meeting the objective of expanding cooperative endeavours in the field of trade and industry between the three countries.

Making a statement in parliament on signing of the agreement at Tehran on February 22, Gujral said it would foster a harmonious climate for multi-layered economic cooperation and strengthen the cause of peace, stability and development in the region, IRNA reported.

The minister said the landmark agreement would further enhance trade and other forms of economic cooperation amongst the three countries and the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) countries which accede to it in future.

The agreement met the need for developing an efficient, reliable, dependable and cost effective route for trade and other forms of economic interaction among the three countries and other economic partners in the CIS region, added Gujral.



TONEKABON — Mazandaran Province — During his 8-day visit of Mazandaran Province, Majlis Speaker, Ali Akbar Nateq Nouri inaugurated a number of development projects including telephone exchanges. Minister of Post, Telephone and Telegraph, Mohammad Gharazi is seen extreme left, next to the speaker. **Photo: Abbas Takin**

Iran Makin Delivered to Iran

Tehran Times Service

TEHRAN — The multi-purpose ship named Iran Makin was delivered to the Islamic Republic of Iran Shipping Lines by China yesterday.

Iran Makin is the fourth 21,000-ton multi-purpose ship which has been built in China at the request of the Islamic Republic of Iran Shipping Lines (IRISL), IRNA reported.

After onloading at Chinese ports, the ship will depart for Iran.

The IRISL has recently ordered another five cargo ships, worth $125 million, to China.

Indo-Iran Joint Commission a Breakthrough

Tehran Times Service

TEHRAN - The recently concluded ninth Indo-Iran joint commission meeting turned out to be a breakthrough development in Indo-Iranian relations, says Atul Aneja, a noted journalist of India in his article, Iran asked to get nod for gas pipeline, published in the English newspaper of India *The Hindu* yesterday.

The joint commission resolved to speed up the gas pipeline project, looked out at carving out a shorter rail corridor to boost India's trade with Iran and Central Asia, proposed a textile plant which will use raw cotton supplied by Turkmenistan and further pushed up Indo-Iran joint venture on fertilisers, writes Aneja.

He notes that the two countries have decided to overcome political difficulties endangering the ambitious 2,000 km-long gas pipeline, which can pump in gas to meet 40 percent of India's future requirements.

It is hoped that Pakistan is persuaded by Iran to allow the pipeline pass through its exclusive economic zone (EEZ), the only way out to neutralize India's fear of Pakistan controlling the supply of gas, adds Aneja.

He argues that the financing of the $2 billion pipeline project is not a tall order. The amount can be raised jointly by the Indian oil and power sector. A 100 percent foreign financing is also possible.

The proposal for building a new rail road from the southern Iranian port of Bandar Abbas to Sarakhs by-passing Tehran also looks promising. It will shorten the route to Central Asia by nealry 700 kms, says Aneja.

If the ninth joint commission meeting is any indication, it seems that New Delhi and Tehran are all set to establish the fertiliser joint venture plant. The urea and amonia that will be produced using Iranian gas are supposed to meet India's growing domestic demand, concludes Aneja.

The Caspian Sea, Its Resources, Its Legal Status and Its Future

The break-up of the Soviet Union at the end of 1991 suddenly left the Islamic Republic of Iran sharing the shores of the Caspian Sea with four other nations instead of just one. In this article, Hossein Hazempour Ardebili, the Iranian Governor for OPEC and Chairman of the Board of Governors, reviews the uncertain status of this energy-rich region and suggests ways forward.



The fall of communism and the disintegration of the former USSR into a number of independent states not only had very dramatic political implications, but also far reaching economic consequences, particularly in the world energy sector. The ensuing fall in the region's oil production, mainly as a result of lack of finance to carry out extensive maintenance, on the one hand, and the initial run of major oil companies into the region looking for windfall profits only to be met with a total lack of the required financial and legal systems on the other, added to the confusion. Most of the new states possess potentially high reserves of oil and gas, but are short of both the financial and technological means required for the timely and economic exploration and development of their energy resources. The situation in the group of states surrounding the Caspian Sea is further complicated by two major factors: the need for exporting their petroleum to the world market through an economic and reliable means, and the legal status of the Caspian Sea. In both these points, the geographic and political position of the Islamic Republic of Iran is of utmost importance. This article aims to address the situation in the region, as well as possible areas of cooperation among the littoral countries of the Caspian Sea.

The Caspian Sea is a common heritage of its coastal nations. It plays an important role, in terms of its oil and gas reserves, and the utilization of its biological resources. It is also very important as a means of maritime transportation and in moderating the climate, creating conditions in its surroundings conducive to agriculture.

The countries surrounding the Caspian Sea have substantial oil and gas reserves estimated, at the end of 1994, in the region of 150 billion barrels of oil and 75 trillion cubic meters of natural gas. These correspond to 15 percent of total world oil reserves and 50 percent of world gas reserves. It is generally believed that, with regional cooperation and through creating an investment-friendly environment, higher figures will be achieved by the first decade of the 21st century.

It is also well-known that the energy resources of these countries far exceed their domestic demand and thus the export of surplus production will go a long way, not only to meet global demand, but also to accelerate the economic development of these producing countries. The transport of these exports to world markets is of vital significance. This presents another area where the Islamic Republic of Iran can play an important role. It has a unique geographical position, bordering by land and or sea, Azerbaijan, Armenia, Turkmenistan, Kazakhstan, and Russia to the north. To the east, west and south lie ten other countries, including some of the oil producing Arab countries. Thus, Iran, with 15 neighboring countries and with its hands in the Caspian Sea and its feet in the Persian Gulf, could be indeed called the energy bridge of the world. Naturally, it offers the most economic outlet for the transport of Caspian Sea exports towards their final markets.

Before discussing in detail the reserves and, thus, prospects of petroleum production in each of the countries in the Caspian region, as well as potential for regional cooperation, it would be appropriate first to briefly review the global energy outlook.

Global Energy Demand

All forecasts, without exception, show that global demand for energy will continue to increase well into the next century, although the geographical pattern may change. The world population is expected to reach eight billion by around the year 2020 and many of the present day developing countries will be experiencing strong economic growth, substantially increasing energy demand. The supply of energy in adequate amounts and at affordable prices is essential for the social well being of the human community. There is no doubt that oil, gas and coal will continue to play an important role in meeting the global demand for energy.

In many of the future energy scenarios, consumption of oil in the year 2000 will be some six to eight million barrels per day higher than in 1995. The incremental increase by the year 2010, could be 11m 18m b/d over 1995. Thus, in order to meet demand for oil in 15 years to come, not only the present level of production needs to be maintained – all depleted fields and the natural decline of producing ones must be replaced – but also an increase equivalent to about twice the present production capacity of Saudi Arabia need will be added.

It is further expected that over the next 15 years, more than 50 percent of the increase in world energy demand will come from the dynamic economies of Asia. Considering that any oil production increase in eastern Asia is unlikely, it is predicted that the dependency of Asia imported oil, which currently stands at 50 percent, will rise to 70 percent by 2010. Forecasts also show that Russia and the Central Asian countries will be among the major suppliers of energy in Asia. Thus, the geopolitical configuration of energy in Asia will be fundamentally transformed.

Meanwhile, the Middle East has been going through fundamental changes and faced various serious crises. OPEC, which had been instrumental in determining prices of energy, particularly oil, has through no choice of its own, found its power transferred to the competitive market. Iraq has been temporarily left out of the oil market. Saudi Arabia has become the leading oil producer. Of the major alternatives to hydrocarbon, coal has lost its importance as the primary source of energy in France, England and Germany, and energy output from nuclear power plants, previously on the rise, is now declining, due to safety and environmental problems.

Let us now return to the subject of oil production and consumption in Central Asia and the Caucasus. *(To be contd)*

TEHRAN TIMES

SPORTS SUMMARY

Teharn Times Service

FOOTBALL

Vicenza Into Italian Cup Final

BOLOGNA, Italy: Vicenza reached the Italian Cup final for the first time in the club's 95-year history here on Tuesday night, when they ground out a 1-1 draw with 10-man Bologna.

Cristian Scapolo scored for Bologna just before half time, making it 1-1 on aggregate after their narrow defeat in the semifinal, first leg at Vicenza.

But three minutes before the niggling, ill-tempered tie was due to head into extra time, Giovanni Corncacchini stepped up to volley home Vicenza's equalizer which earned them a 2-1 aggregate victory.

Vicenza now face the winner of Wednesday's other semifinal between Napoli and Inter Milan. The final will be played over two legs in June.

Robson Gets Tough With Players

BARCELONA: Barcelona Coach Bobby Robson criticized his club captain Gica Popescu, formerly sweeper at premiership side Spurs, here on Tuesday for appearing on a late night television show — and added that he was going to instill a stricter regime in the dressing room.

Robson, buoyed by a 4-1 win on Sunday against Real Zaragoza and club president Jose Nunez's vote of confidence last week, said that Romanian international Popescu's appearance on Monday's '100 percent football' show was not very intelligent as they play the first leg of their Spanish Cup quarterfinal tie with Atletico Madrid on Wednesday.

"I cannot see why two days before a vital match Gica should think that to appear on a show that started at midnight and finished at two in the morning is good preparation for the game," Robson said.

Sacchi Says Keep Quiet and Work Hard

MILAN: AC Milan Coach Arrigo Sacchi said on Tuesday that the only cure for his ailing Italian champions were for them to work hard and keep their mouths shut.

The atmosphere in the changing rooms has reached a new low, with Roberto Baggio regularly firing off insults at Sacchi and Dugarry, who only signed from 1996 UEFA Cup finalists Bordeaux last summer, wondering openly whether he would not be better off elsewhere.

But Sacchi issued a call to arms at Tuesday's training session at Milanello, near the Swiss border.

"Talk less, and work harder," was Sacchi's recipe for beating the crisis. "No outbursts, no hysterics and no victimization. For those who want the best for Milan, this is what counts most at the moment."

Shearer Undergoes Second Groin Operation

LONDON: England Captain Alan Shearer on Tuesday afternoon underwent his second groin operation of the season.

The news comes as a crushing blow to Newcastle boss Kenny Dalglish as he prepares for a two-pronged challenge for Honours.

Shearer must also be rated extremely doubtful for England's friendly against Mexico at Wembley on March 29.

TENNIS

Stich Slumps Again, Ivanisevic Through

MILAN: Former Wimbledon champion Michael Stich's desperate form continued here on Tuesday when he slumped 5-7, 6-4, 6-2 to German compatriot David Prinosil in the first round of the 815,000-dollar Italian indoors.

There was no such trouble for top seed Goran Ivanisevic, though the temperamental Croat was made to work for his 7-6 (7/2), 6-7 (2/7), 6-2 victory over Russian Andrei Olhovskiy.

Stich, whose ATP Tour ranking has plummeted to 32, has won only a single match this year while losing five, including four first round losses.

Seles Loses Appeal Against Back-Stabber

HAMBURG, Germany: World Tennis number six Monica Seles's final appeal against the suspended sentence handed out to Gunther Parche, the German who stabbed her in the back on court four years ago, has been rejected by the German courts, Parche's lawyer said on Tuesday.

Parche, who seriously injured the former world number one at a tournament in Hamburg on April 30, 1993 because he wanted his idol Steffi Graf to regain number one status, was given a suspended sentence of two years in prison, a punishment confirmed by a court of appeal in 1995.

FORMULA ONE

Bridgestone to Supply Five F1 Teams

TOKYO: Bridgestone has added former world champion Alain Prost's new team to its growing list of clients who include reigning champion Damon Hill.

The Japanese tire maker said Tuesday it would supply five out of the 12 F1 teams, breaking the monopoly held by Good Year of the United States for five years since Italy's Pirelli pulled out.

Prost-Mugen-Honda, Arrows-Yamaha, Minardi-Hart, Steward-Ford and Lola-Ford machines will all be supplied with Bridgestone tires.

NORDIC SKIING

Daehlie Flags in Gold

TRONDHEIM, Norway: Bjorn Daehlie, brandishing a Norwegian flag, coasted home for his second gold medal at the Nordic Skiing World Championships here on Tuesday.

He finished 50 seconds ahead of Finland's Mika Myllyla, who beat Russia's Alexi Prokurorov on the line, in the 15km freestyle pursuit.

Samaranch Confirms He Plans to Run Again

LAUSANNE, Switzerland — Juan Antonio Samaranch indicated in the strongest terms so far Wednesday that he will run for a fourth term as president of the International Olympic Committee.

In an interview broadcast on the Swiss radio station Radio Suisse Romande, Samaranch said he will be a candidate if the medical certificate he expects in the next few days is "favorable."

Samaranch, who turns 77 in July, has always indicated that he plans to seek another term as long as his health permits. He has shown no signs of slowing down in recent months.

Samaranch's current mandate expires in September. If he wins a fourth term as expected, he will remain in office until 2001.

Samaranch is expected to officially announce his candidature at a meeting of the IOC Executive Board in Lausanne next week.

The former Spanish diplomat enjoys virtually unchallenged support within the IOC and no one is expected to run against him.

Samaranch was elected IOC president in 1980 and has since been reelected twice by acclamation.

In 1995, IOC members voted to raise the retirement age from 75 to 80 to allow Samaranch to seek another term. (AP)

Two Kazakh Muslims to Run to Mecca on Pilgrimage

ALMATY — Two Islamic athletes have set off on a pilgrimage with a difference. They are running the 5,000-kilometers (3,000-miles) from Kazakhstan to the Muslim holy city of Mecca, Kazkah officials said Wednesday.

The two 30-year-old marathon runners, Balgabai Kulpeisov and Mendibai Alimgasinov, actually left the southern town of Turkestan on February 19 and reached Samarkand, in Uzbekistan, on Tuesday, the officials from the Sports and Tourism Ministry said.

The two Muslims, who are covering about 70 kilometers (40 miles) per day, will also cross Turkmenistan and Iran before reaching Saudi Arabia. They plan to be in Mecca around April 15.

The runners will be making one concession to geography. They will fly over the Persian Gulf.

"They have been preparing for two years. This adventure is their way of showing their patriotism and their Muslim faith," ministry official Yensebek Imangaliyev said. (AFP)

Rosset Keeps Up Winning Run

MILAN, Italy — Marc Rosset, fresh on the heels of his first tournament success in almost two years, continued his winning ways Wednesday with a 6-4, 6-2 victory over Francisco Clavet for a place in the second round of the 815,000-dollar Italian indoors.

The seventh-seeded Swiss, who towers more than two meters tall and uses all of his leverage to produce a huge serve, opened his week with a smooth victory over Clavet, a Spaniard ranked No. 33 on the ATP Tour computer.

Rosset and Clavet exchanged early first-set breaks before the world No. 16 Swiss took the edge 3-2. Rosset clinched the set from a Clavet unforced error. He then broke three times in the second set and concluded the victory with an ace. (AFP)



CLEVELAND, OH, United States (Feb. 25): Seattle SuperSonics guard Gary Payton (R) glides over Bobby Phills of the Cleveland Cavaliers to sink two of his eight points during the second half of game action, at Gund Arena in Cleveland, OH. The Sonics defeated the Cavs, 72 to 66.

(AFP PHOTO)

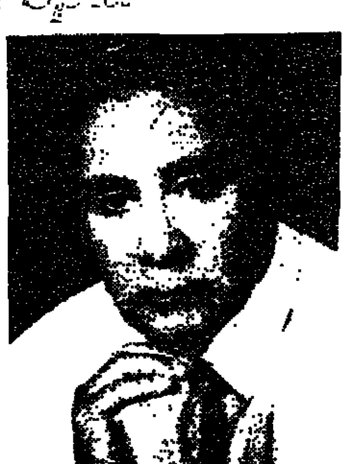
Understanding Kung Fu as Described by a Master

By Ja'far Qasempour Jahangir

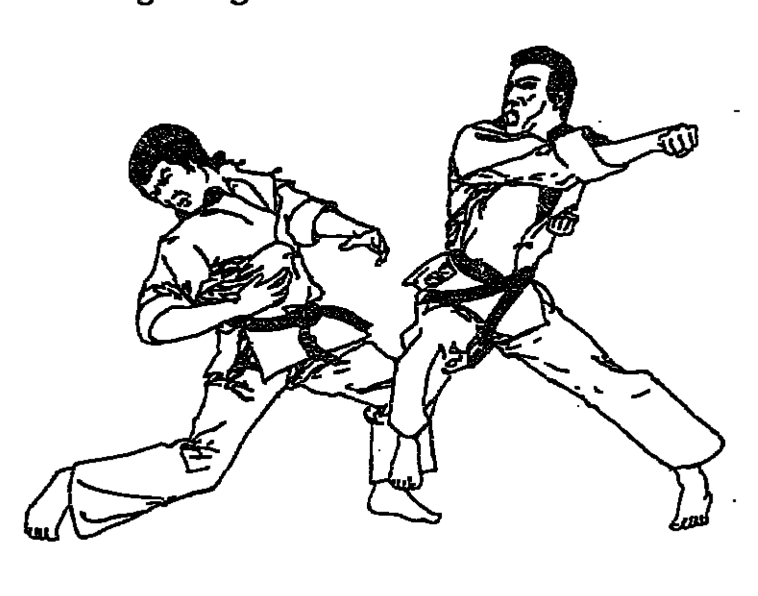
Skills of Kung Fu

(Part 28)

Lateral Spar



The lower part of the body is weak in most of the people. Hence, the blows on this part usually work. In here, timing is very important because you should start attacking when the rival's arm is passing or moving in opposite direction. In order to defend a direct front blow on right guard position, you may do the following: 1) Keep your arm in front of your face and a little higher than usual. Lean on the left side as soon as the opponent launches his fist at your face and then defend the rival's blow through striking his forearm and fist with your left hand. To defend a strong blow, much power is not needed. Since you have spoiled the rival's guard, he becomes vulnerable and cannot protect his face and body against your attack. 2) Take one step forward and then turn to the left and strike a crushing right blow on his face or body. 3) Take one step to the right with your right foot, strike a powerful left-handed blow on your rival's face or body. 4) Take step backward and then make a lightning counterattack.



Direct Left Blow

In kung fu, the direct left blow struck either in a counterattack or combined attack can be very strong if it's performed correctly. Even its power is more than the power of a direct front fist because you are at a greater distance of your rival and consequently you can increase your blow's power before touching the target. In addition, you can help you body's power to strike the fist. It seems strange for the right-handers to use their left hands. They should take incessant exercise of left-handed fists on heavy punching bag to become a master. To strike a direct left blow, you should be on your guard, turn your thigh joints clockwise so that the pivot of turning be based on the retrograde leg, the body's weight be born by forward leg, your forward arm be in front of your face to defend, your fist launch from opposite side of your nose to defend your trunk after blowing. The target can be every part of your rival's head. Although the jaw is the most vulnerable part but you should not blow the rival's head all the time, i.e. you have to make attacks on his trunk and abdomen.

Tajik Government, Islamic Activists Resume Talks

MOSCOW – Tajik government and Islamic opposition officials began a new round of peace talks here Wednesday focusing on ways to integrate the activists into a new national army, Tajik officials said.

Tajik Foreign Minister Talbak Nazarov, heading the government delegation, met opposition leader Said Abdullah Nuri for talks which could continue until March 5 or 6, a Tajik Embassy spokesman said.

Opposition sources quoted by Interfax news agency said the talks would cover plans to form a new national army including activist units.

Gerd Dietrich Merrem, the UN special envoy mediating between both sides, said it was important for them to reach an accord on merging their armed forces in order to make progress on the political front.

Nuri and Tajik President Emomali Rakhmanov signed a peace accord in Moscow on December 23 envisaging the creation of a reconciliation commission and a post-war government.

Fighting has continued to rage in Tajikistan since Rakhmanov seized power with Moscow's backing in December 1992, ousting a coalition of Islamists and democrats.

(AFP)

Pakistani Shia Leader Shot Dead

MULTAN, Pakistan — Gunmen shot dead a Shia Muslim political party leader Wednesday, taking the death toll from sectarian violence in Pakistan in the last week to at least 10, police said.

Seyed Ashiq Hussain Shah, head of the Tehreek-i-Jafria Pakistan (TJP) in Jahanian near here, was gunned down by two men on motorcycles while going to a local grain market.

The assailants fled, leaving Shah, a grain merchant, in a pool of blood, police said.

This was the fourth incident in the central Province of Punjab since gunmen stormed the Iranian Cultural Center in Multan last Thursday, killing seven people including the Iranian consul, Mohammad Ali Rahimi.

Iran blamed an extremist Sunni Muslim faction, the Sipah-i-Sahaba Pakistan (SSP).

Police have arrested several hundred activists since the killing of Osama Maoud, a Senior Punjab government official from the Sunni community in Lahore on Monday.

The crackdown came as the new government of Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif ordered steps to contain the upsurge in sectarian violence.

(AFP)

Chernomyrdin to Be Sacked Soon

MOSCOW — Russian Prime Minister Viktor Chernomyrdin will soon be dismissed, a front-page story in the daily *Izvestia* said Wednesday, quoting a "very well-informed source in the entourage of the head of government."

The source was quoted as saying that President Boris Yeltsin had already decided to sack the prime minister. The only problem was when and how.

The daily said the source had predicted a date after Yeltsin's annual message to Parliament, which is scheduled to be delivered on March 6.

Yeltsin, who is displeased with the progress of the government in resolving social problems in Russia, asked Chernomyrdin Monday to consider a shake-up in the structure of the administration, and changes in personnel if necessary.

Izvestia said that its source had mentioned two possible contenders, Yeltsin's chief of staff Anatoly Chubais and Yegor Stroyev, speaker of the Upper House of Parliament, the Federation Council.

Stroyev was the better placed of the two, the source added.

Chernomyrdin, 58, has been prime minister since December 1992.

(AFP)

Russia Can Meet Turkey's Arms Needs

ANKARA – Russia is prepared to sell Turkey a wide variety of arms including assault helicopters and missile systems, the Russian ambassador here said Wednesday.

"We are ready to sell to Turkey several arms systems, including assault helicopters, tanks, missile systems and light arms. You name the type," Ambassador Vadim Kuznetsov told reporters.

His remarks came the day after Turkish Defense Minister Turhan Tayan called on the United States to release suspended weapons transfers to Ankara, warning that otherwise Turkey could seek other arms suppliers.

"Our arms export company Rosvoorouzheniye has been in contact with Turkish authorities, and several Russian defense systems have already been demonstrated here," Kuznetsov said.

"We are ready to meet Turkey's direct procurement needs and also to set up joint ventures to manufacture arms jointly with Turkish companies," he said.

Defense sources said Rosvoorouzheniye had already proposed to Ankara the joint production of MI-28 and KA-52 assault helicopters, MI-26 heavy transport helicopters, T-80 tanks and Kalashnikov automatic guns, as well as the sale of S-300 surface-to-air missiles and other missile systems.

(AFP)

Three Businessmen Murdered in Kashmir

SRINAGAR — Separatists killed three businessmen here on suspicion they had joined hands with a rival militant organization, the police said Wednesday.

Mahiudin Langoo, a prominent businessmen, and his son were shot dead in a crowded commercial district of Srinagar while another trader was murdered elsewhere in the city, the police said. (AFP)

(Contd From Pg. 1)

PRESIDENT OFF...

The President is also to inaugurate a shrimp cultivation center, the 200-bed hospital, a branch of Refah Chain Stores and 10 industrial projects in Boushehr.

Meanwhile under pressure irrigation system of some 1000 hectares of the province's farmlands as well as 17 other agricultural projects are to go on stream by President Rafsanjani.

The president will also inaugurate the Boushehr-Deir-Bandar Abbas coastal road. More than 34.6 billion rials has been so far spent for construction of the road.

(Contd From Pg. 1)

1ST...

flow of hard currency and create a source of earning foreign currency.

He added that the second phase of the complex is to become operational in March.

Built over an area of 408 hectares, the TPC, with its two phases in operation, will be able to produce some 500,000 tons of petrochemicals, 300,000 tons of which will be used for manufacturing tires and plastic products.

"The construction of the whole complex has been carried out by the Iranian contractors, which has resulted in saving some $300 million due to utilizing the domestic potential," the managing director noted.

Sedqi concluded by saying that the project has been implemented at a cost of $1,106 million, Rls 2,200 billion.

(Contd From Pg. 1)

SECURITY...

The permanent representatives of the 22 Arab League members took part in the committee meeting on Tuesday and Wednesday on the proposed pact at the organization's headquarters in the Egyptian capital.

The pact was approved in principle at the last Arab summit in Cairo in June, but the committee was aiming to finalize the initiative in time for a foreign ministers' meeting here on March 30. (AFP)

(Contd From Pg. 1)

ISRAEL...

"Building in Jerusalem (Bait-ul-Moqaddas) does not involve a breach of any sort of agreement that we have with the other side," he said.

Palestinians staged a protest march in Bait-ul-Moqaddas on Tuesday and warned of potential violence if the Israeli government carried through its plans — a threat condemned by Levy.

(AFP)

(Contd From Pg. 1)

7TH...

region has led to more solidarity among them, enabling the organization to upgrade relations with other international and regional organizations throughout the world.

"Regional cooperation is vital for economic growth and development and participation of ECO members in joint projects would help to materialize the objectives of the organization," Mirzadeh underlined.

Elaborating on the ECO activities, the vice-president emphasized that significant infrastructural measures have been taken by the organization in recent years and that the organization gives top priority to the expansion of regional cooperation in the fields of commerce, transportation, communications and energy.

The head of the PBO further landed the member states for the establishment of ECO Shipping Company and the ECO Air, noting that the shipping line currently transports different kinds of commodities in the Persian Gulf and the Caspian Sea.

Elsewhere in his address, Mirzadeh said that the organization is going to set up its development bank and insurance company in the near future through collective efforts of its members.

Touching on the great potential and capabilities of the region, he pointed out that the region enjoys abundant energy resources such as oil and gas and underlined that the regional countries would be able to make optimum use of these resources through collective measures and cooperation. "Other international organizations such as ESCAP, UNIDO, FAO, UNDP, and the Bank of Islamic Development can extend assistance to ECO in carrying out the joint projects," he added.

The PBO head concluded by reiterating that the cooperation among regional unions and organizations such as ASEAN, EU and ECO will lead to more active presence of ECO members in the international scenes.

(Contd From Pg. 1)

PRESIDENT ...

He said the governor generals are required to practice trustworthy and impartiality in holding the elections. "You are entitled to take a ballot of your own," the president told the governor generals and the Interior Ministry officials in charge of the elections.

Meanwhile, the governor generals of the provinces offered a certificate of success to President Rafsanjani on behalf of the peoples of all provinces for his meritorious services as president of the Islamic Republic of Iran for the two consecutive terms.

(IRNA)

(Contd From Pg. 1)

ZIONIST ..

were hitting during questioning.

"He died from the loss of blood and also from being choked," said Nasser Halawi, a relative of Mohammed Halawi, who died at a hospital in Bait-ul-Moqaddas late Tuesday.

"They threw him on the ground and a soldier put his knee on his neck," Nasser Halawi told AFP. "When I tried to help him he said 'don't come near' because he was afraid I would be shot."

Palestinian security services, meanwhile, denounced the killing.

The Palestinian security services on Wednesday denounced the killing of a Palestinian by Israeli special forces who opened fire the previous evening on civilians outside East Bait-ul-Moqaddas.

"The soldiers of this special unit were in civilian clothes and entered the home of a Palestinian without reason," a statement from the general security agency said.

The soldiers "provoked troubles and killed Mohammed Abdel Aziz Abu Halawi, an innocent, 55-year-old retiree who had no political activities," the statement said.

The shooting, in which three other Palestinians were wounded, took place late Tuesday in the village of Hizmeh Just outside East Bait-ul-Moqaddas, which was then closed off by the Zionist Army.

The Palestinian statement said the self-rule deals signed between Israel and the Palestinians "do not permit Israel to act in this way."

Local Administration Minister Saeb Erakat delivered an official protest to Israeli government Secretary Danny Neveh and demanded an investigation into "the murder of an elderly man."

The shooting apparently came after a botched raid by three members of the special undercover army unit on the home of a Palestinian in the village.

(AFP)

(Contd From Pg. 12)

WHAT'S...

ing off. Instead, our TV stations produce all sorts of the Spring Festival Eve entertainment and the whole family sits in front of the TV set enjoying its programs. When the clock strikes 12 at midnight, hundreds of firecrackers are set off and fire works displayed in the sky, ushering in the lunar New Year.

Daybreak begins the first day of the lunar New Year. People use 3 days of the holiday to visit relatives and friends and exchange New Year's greetings. Besides, there are many entertainments with local features held all over the country. Take Beijing for an example. Temple Fair held at the last Spring Festival offered both cultural activities and foodstuff, special commodities for the Spring Festival, and various knickknacks. The Flower Fair at Longtan is a place for people to appreciate various folk performing arts including the lion dance, the trotting donkey, the boat dance and stilt walking. The Grand View Garden, a reproduction of the one in the famous Chinese classical work "The Dream of the Red Mansion, presented the Spring Festival entertainment. With hearty laughter and throngs of visitors the whole garden is full of festival air.

(Contd From Pg.9)

YELTSIN...

have to reassess their tactics. Lebed has been widely tipped as the likely winner if a presidential election were called soon, seeing off possible challenges from Prime Minister Viktor Chernomyrdin, Moscow Mayor Yuri Luzhkov and communist leader Gennady Zyuganov.

Yeltsin appears to have decided that one way to demonstrate his authority is to talk tough.

Hitting back at communist-led attempts to oust him, Yeltsin told reporters on Sunday: They should know I am a fighter and I remain a fighter. They shouldn't attack me too hard because I can hit back. He also hinted he may mark his comeback with personnel changes. Criticizing the government, he told Chernomyrdin on Monday: Maybe we need some changes, maybe we need some names, maybe we need some people to be changed in the government.

But doubts linger over whether Yeltsin has the energy, determination or even the interest to push through reforms and sort out the economic, political and military problems that have piled up in his absence.

He may still take major political decisions but his involvement in the everyday running of the country could be limited.

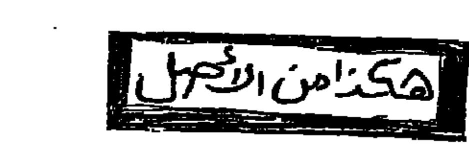
His task is to be a living symbol. The people who have been running everyday affairs while he was away will continue to do so, said Sergei Markov, a political analyst at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace Think-Tank.

Chernomyrdin and top Kremlin aide Anatoly Chubais are widely credited with mapping out policy in Yeltsin's absence and analysts said they would try to keep Yeltsin in power for as long as possible to avoid giving lebed a shot at the presidency.

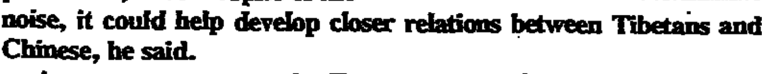
Yeltsin's main task now is to survive, Piontkowski said.

(Reuter)





Dalai Lama Says Planned Taiwan Visit Spiritual



DHARAMSALA, India – Exiled Tibetan leader the Dalai Lama said his planned visit to Taiwan next month would be a strictly spiritual event which could help improve ties between the Chinese and the Tibetans. This visit will be strictly spiritual in nature, the Dalai Lama told Reuters television at his Indian headquarters in Dharamsala on Saturday.

In fact, I feel that in the eyes of many Chinese, overseas and on the mainland, if they properly study and look at the proposed visit, I feel in spite of the noise, it could help develop closer relations between Tibetans and Chinese, he said.

A newspaper report in Taipei said on Sunday that Tibetan Buddhism's exiled god-king would start his six-day Taiwan visit on March 22, uninterrupted by the death of China's paramount Leader Deng Xiaoping.

The Dalai Lama did not confirm the dates.

The mass circulation United Daily News newspaper said the Dalai Lama could meet President Lee Teng-Hui during his stay.

The host of the visit, Taiwan's Buddhist Association of the Republic of China, said it had consulted lee's office about the meeting, but no date had been finalized.

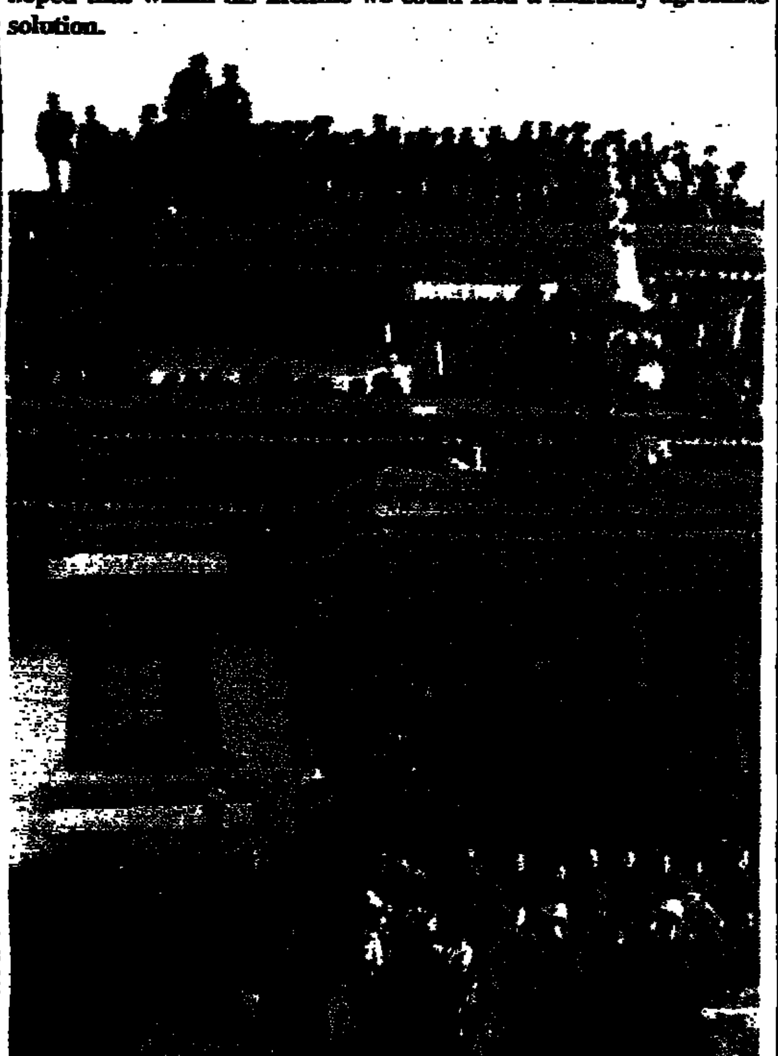
Beijing considers the Dalai Lama and Lee as two leading splittists who seek to divide Tibet and Taiwan from the motherland and the reported meeting was almost certain to risk the wrath of China.

The Dalai Lama voiced regret that Deng died without resolving questions over Tibet.

I want to mention that in 1979, my elder brother, my personal emissary, had a long meeting with (Deng), the Dalai Lama said.

At that time he stated that (except) the question of Tibetan independence, anything can be discussed regarding Tibetan issues.

You see this problem is neither good for China or for Tibet – so we have to find a solution to this problem (and I had) very much hoped that within his lifetime we could find a mutually agreeable solution.



But that did not happen, and that is my regret, the Dalai Lama said.

Tibet was ruled by a theocratic Buddhist elite until 1950 when China's People's Liberation Army took over the area.

Local media in Taipei has reported the Dalai Lama would also meet high-level Taiwan officials during his stay, although the Taiwan host repeated the he would have no official contacts and activities while in Taiwan.

China assails the Dalai Lama, who fled into exile in India in 1959, as a splittist seeking to divide Tibet from China and accuses countries that allow him to visit of meddling in China's internal affairs.

Similarly, China regards Taiwan as a renegade province since a civil war split them in 1949. It views Lee's reforms, including direct presidential election in March 1996 and pursuit of international recognition's as moves for Taiwan independence.

The Dalai Lama has praised President Lee for initiating democratic reforms on the nationalist island and lee was reported to have welcomed the Dalai Lama to Taiwan in May 1996 exchange of letters.

Reuter

Turkish MPs to Debate Islamist Censure Motion

ANKARA – Turkey's parliament was putting the Islamic underpinnings of Prime Minister Necmettin Erbakan's *government to the test* Tuesday with a censure motion put forward by two opposition paries.

It appeared that the eight-month coalition government would survive the motion, if MPs first agree to put it on their order paper in the grand national assembly for a vote later this week or early next week.

But the fact that it exists in the first place is reminder of the clash between modern Turkey's secular tradition – defended by the military – and the pro-Islamist slant represented by Erbakan's Welfare Party.

In an interview with the Milliyet newspaper, published Tuesday, the commander of Turkey's navy went so far as to call Islamic fundamentalists a greater national threat than kurdish rebels in the southeast.

"The *activities of religious* extremists have become the main problem in Turkey," Admiral Guven Erkaya said. "The threat posed by the (separatist) Kurdistan Workers' Party (KPP) ranks second."

Only a simple majority will be needed for the censure motion to be put on the agenda, although an absolute majority – at least 276 votes in the 550-seat parliament – is required for its adoption.

Thanks to its coalition with the secular, right-wing true path party, led by Foreign Minister Tansu Ciller, a former prime minister, the Welfare Party has a slim three-seat majority in parliament.

The motion to be debated on Tuesday was put forth by two left-wing parties – the Republican People's Party, led by Deniz Baykal, and the democratic left party, headed by Bulent Ecevit.

In a reference to Welfare's pro-Islamist slant, the two parties accuse the government of "ignoring activites threatening the fundamental principles of the Republic and failing to take necessary measures."

A dozen or so true path MPs, led by one of the Party's Vice presidents, Necmettin Cevheri, are openly frustrated with welfare and want an end to the coalition, but analysts doubt they would go so far as to vote against the *government in a censure motion.*

A small Islamist and nationalist group, the Great Union Party, with seven MPs, has indicated that it would not vote for censure.

Tension soared in Turkey between the *influential military* and the Islamists in early February in the wake of a controversial rally by Islamic fundamentalists in an Ankara suburb.

Those who addressed the rally in Sincan district, including Iran's ambassador in Ankara, called for the adoption of the Sharia, or Islamic law, in Turkey, prompting an uproar by secular groups.

On February 4, dozens of army tanks drove through the streets of Sincan in an apparent show of force against the Islamists, also raising concerns of a possible coup.

In reaction, Erbakan's government suspended efforts to allow women to wear islamic headscarves in government offices and universities.

Last Saturday, General Cevik Bir, deputy chief of the turkish general staff, told a turkish-american friendship group in washington that the turkish military regarded itself as defender of the secular principles adopted by Mustafa Kemal Ataturk, who founded modern Turkey in 1923.

"We expect the government to fully conform to these (secular) principles," Bir was quoted as saying in Turkish press reports.

TTe turkish military – a component within the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) – has staged three coups, in 1960, 1971 and 1980, with the pretext of protecting the state against destructive political movements.

AFP

High-Powered Saudi Team to Meet U.S. Leaders

WASHINGTON – A high-powered Saudi Arabian delegation arrived in Washington on Monday to meet the new Clinton Administration and try to allay concerns over the probe into last year's bombing against Americans in the kingdom.

Led by Defense Minister Prince Sultan, representing his brother King Fahd, the team includes key decision-makers including Saudi Arabia's foreign, oil and trade ministers and a deputy finance minister. They will stay until Friday.

They are due to meet President Bill Clinton at the White House on Tuesday and top U.S. cabinet officials for talks ranging from Persian Gulf security and Saudi defense needs to the Middle East Peace Process and oil strategy.

Meetings have been fixed with Defense Secretary William Cohen on Wednesday and with Secretary of State Madeleine Albright, fresh from a globe-trotting tour of major U.S. allies and world powers, on Thursday.

One senior Saudi diplomat said before the arrival: This is a new administration for practical purposes – second term, change in national security team ... we feel this is as good a time as any to sit down at the highest level and take a look at the next four years.

The close U.S.-Saudi relationship. has been dogged in recent months by U.S. complaints that Riyadh was not sharing enough information on its investigation into last June's truck bombing that killed 19 American servicemen in Dhahran.

Both *U.S.* and *Saudi officials* say a number of suspects have been arrested, but as recently as Feb. 12 a senior FBI official told congress that Saudi authorities had still not provided evidence the United States wanted.

The senior Saudi diplomat, briefing reporters on condition he was not identified, said he believed the problem was now history, but added: It would be nice to kill it once and for all this week.

Another Saudi source said: We are way further ahead than many people believe we are in the investigation.

Since the bombing most of the 5,000 U.S. servicemen in Saudi Arabia, whose main task is to enforce a no-fly-zone over southern Iraq, have been moved away from populated centers to more remote and easily protected locations.

The Saudi diplomat said their presence was reviewed at regular intervals and no formal agreement to make it permanent had been either requested by Saudi Arabia or proposed by the United States.

While Riyadh has firmly backed Washington's tough policy of maintaining UN sanctions on Iraq for its 1990 invasion of Kuwait, Saudi officials said their concern about possible chaos if *President Saddam Hussein falls* may come up this week.

The strategic question is are we thinking for the post- Saddam era? One said. Do we have a plan for what we do when that regime collapses?

Washington sees strong Saudi defenses as a key element in gulf stability, and Saudi officials have made clear they would like to replace their aging fleet of 114 U.S. F-5 fighters, probably with F-16s.

Prince Sultan, however, earlier this month denied U.S. press reports that he would seek to purchase the Lockheed Martin Corp F-16s during this week's trip. the reports have already raised concerns in Israel.

U.S. leaders are expected to press the Saudis to continue moves toward normalization with Israel, *despite last year's advent to power* of a right-wing Likud administration. But Saudi Arabia, like other Arab states, believes it is up to Israel to make the first move by agreeing to give up occupied Arab land.

Saudi Arabian Oil Minister Ali Naimi is expected to discuss the oil market situation and international negotiations for a climate change treaty with acting U.S. energy Secretary Charles Curtis, U.S. officials said.

An energy department official said Washington planned to raise the possible leasing out of space in the *U.S.* strategic petroleum reserve to Saudi Arabia, the world's largest oil producer and exporter.

Persian Gulf sources said, however, they did not expect any oil-for-arms deal to be discussed.

Reuter

Government Announces Offensive Against Karen Rebels

RANGOON, Burma – Breaking a silence on its military operations along the Thai-Burmese border, the government announced Sunday its troops had killed 41 ethnic Karen rebels in a continuing offensive which began Feb. 11.

State radio said government forces had clashed 53 times with the Karen National Union in three areas of southeastern Burma since the push began against the country's last major insurgency.

"Mopping up operations" were continuing and more Karen fighters were expected to surrender to the government side, the broadcast said.

The offensive has displaced *thousands of Karen civilians* and led to artillery exchanges between Thai and Burmese troops along the frontier. The report made no mention of the escalation of tensions with Thailand.

State radio said the offensive was launched after leaders of the Karen National Union unilaterally broke off peace talks with Rangoon.

The rebels, who have been fighting since 1947, demand autonomy from the central government and have refused any compromise that excludes Aung San Suu Kyi, Burma's Nobel Peace Prize Laureate and pro-democracy leader.

The broadcast claimed that 41 rebel bodies had been counted and 293 weapons along with 270,000 rounds of ammunition were seized. Another 243 weapons and 70,000 rounds of ammunition were *brought in by 511 officers* and soldiers who surrendered following disagreements with the "extremist leadership" of the rebel movement, the broadcast said.

"More KNU members who want peace and wish to exchange weapons for peace are expected to come in," it said.

An estimated 20,000 people have crossed into Thailand or were attempting to since the fighting erupted, joining some 90,000 already there.

The proximity of the fighting to Thailand has led to exchanges of fire between the Burmese troops and Thais, who in the past have used the various ethnic armies along the border as a buffer against Burma.

Mahn Shar, KNU vice secretary-general, said last Friday that about 100 government troops had been killed or wounded in the fighting. He did not estimate Karen casualties but said the KNU was waging hit-and-run attacks to minimize casualties.

The KNU says the offensive began Feb. 8 and was led by Thura Sit Maung, whom it described as "notorious for human rights abuse perpetrated against the civilian population in southern Burma."

International human rights agencies have in recent years compiled detailed documentation of human rights abuses by the Burmese military in areas held or influenced by ethnic minority rebels. These include summary executions, torture and rape of civilians, forced *evacuations* of villages and use of civilians as front-line porters.

Rangoon routinely denies charges of human rights abuse.

AP

Provincial Governor Bans Smoking in Offices, Buses

CAIRO, Egypt – A provincial governor has banned smoking in government offices and public buses and threatened to transfer repeated offenders out of the province.

AP

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Horse in Bedroom Is Poser for Scottish Firemen

EDINBURGH - Scottish firemen have made a tricky rescue — a hungry horse from the upstairs bedroom of an old house.

Max broke out of his converted stable on the ground floor and followed a trail of spilled feed up a narrow stair, squeezing through two sharp turns, to a bedroom where forage was kept.

The floor gave way, leaving the five-year-old gelding trapped astride a supporting beam with legs dangling through the ceiling of the room below.

Two fire engines and two rescue vehicles answered an emergency call to the farm in central Scotland. *(Reuter)*

For Sale — France's Only Private Glacier

PARIS - For sale, France's only privately-owned glacier. Pristine Alpine views, eagles and deer, no noisy human neighbors. Price: five million francs (880,000).

Frustrated for 30 years, owners of the Gebroulaz glacier in the Alps are making a new push to sell their icy valley near the ski resorts of Meribel and Val Thorens despite a state ruling in 1990 outlawing any new building. *(Reuter)*

Conference on Eliminating Child Labor Opens

AMSTERDAM — An International Conference on Child Labor opened Wednesday with scathing criticism of societies that let children be forced into slavery and prostitution.

"The world is crazy," German Labor and Social Affairs Minister Norbert Blum told delegates at the International Labor Organization Conference.

"One must call a spade a spade," he said. "Prostitution is a crime. Slavery is a crime, and there can be no attenuating circumstances."

"Although the 21st century is imminent, we have not left the 19th century behind us," Dutch Social Affairs and Employment Minister Ad Melkert said.

"Referring to other cultures, customs and traditions can never be an excuse for the most inhuman forms of child labor," he said.

The two-day talks will highlight the plight of millions of children worldwide caught in the web of prostitution, child-trafficking, slavery, debt bondage and work in dangerous environments and industries that kills an unknown number of youngsters each year.

The meeting, organized by the Dutch government and the ILO, brings together ministers from the principal countries concerned — Bangladesh, Brazil, Egypt, India, Kenya, the Philippines, Tanzania and Thailand — along with leading donor groups.

The talks will also aim to prepare the groundwork for strengthened international legislation against abuse of children in the workplace. (AFP)

Thai Troops Push Karen Men Back into Burmese War Zone

BANGKOK — Thai troops have pushed Karen men back into a war zone in Burma, while trucking women and children away from the area, where major infrastructure projects are planned, border sources said Wednesday.

Burmese opposition groups meanwhile alleged serious human rights abuses by the military in the course of a dry-season offensive against the Karen National Union (KNU), launched by the junta earlier this month.

"These abuses include the burning of villages, extrajudicial killings, arbitrary arrest, forced labor (and) portering, and the looting of villagers' possessions," the National Council of the Union of Burma (NCUB) said in a statement.

Fierce fighting and heavy shelling continued as the troops of the Burmese junta pushed into the last strongholds of the KNU, which has fought for greater autonomy from Rangoon for 50 years, the border sources said.

No comprehensive casualty figures have been reported.

The Karen refugee population in Thailand climbed to nearly 100,000, but may have slipped back as several thousand of them have apparently merged with the hundreds of thousands of Burmese in the country's illegal workforce. (AFP)



DOHA, Qatar (Feb. 25): British Prince Charles inspects guards of honor with Qatari Crown Prince Jassem ibn Hamad al-Thani in Doha. Charles is currently visiting the Persian Gulf rich oil states. (AFP PHOTO)

China Rocked as Bombs on Xinjiang Buses Kill Seven

BEIJING — Separatists shattered China's calm following the death of patriarch Deng Xiaoping by killing at least seven people in three terrorist bombings in Xinjiang, officials and residents said Wednesday.

The suspected "freedom fighters" detonated three home-made bombs on public buses in Xinjiang's capital, Urumqi, late Tuesday.

"Seven people were killed and 67 were injured in three explosions on the public buses, but a fourth bomb was found before it exploded," a provincial-level official said.

He said he received the information directly from Urumqi's quick-reaction security forces, but spoke on the condition of anonymity.

The attack came as Beijing cleared away the last of Deng's funeral wreaths and wound up its six-day mourning period for the patriarch who had condoned often repressive policies in Xinjiang and neighbouring Tibet.

Local residents in Urumqi said the Paramilitary People's Armed Police (PAP) had placed cordons across all major access roads in the city and were carrying out identity checks on everybody passing.

Military trucks and patrols were also moving through the city center.

The explosions ripped through buses plying routes two, 10 and 44 between 1830 and 1900 local time (1030-1100 gmt) on Tuesday, while a fourth bomb on a bus on route 58 was discovered before it detonated. (AFP)

S. Korea's Cabinet Resigns for Post-Scandal House-Cleaning

SEOUL — The South Korean cabinet resigned on Wednesday to pave the way for a sweeping clearout of a government tainted by an explosive loans scandal.

"I offered my resignation ... after talks with other cabinet members," Prime Minister Lee Soo-Sung said.

The prime minister said he tendered his resignation and that of the cabinet to President Kim Young-Sam, the day after Kim apologized publicly for the behavior of his son and confidants ensnared in the Hanbo loans-for-kickbacks scandal.

"I told cabinet members that the entire cabinet should take full responsibility," Lee said.

It was Lee's second offer to step down in a month over the scandal, for which 10 prominent figures, including three presidential confidants, are under arrest.

The prime minister, an academic, has been considered high on the ruling camp's list of candidates for presidential elections in December. Kim Young-Sam, a former dissident, is barred from running by the constitution.

The president gave no indication whether he had accepted the resignations, which followed those Tuesday of 12 top members of Kim's office and the leaders of the ruling New Korea Party (NKP).

But the prime minister indicated a cabinet reshuffle may come next week at the end of a volatile parliamentary debate on the scandal and a controversial labor law. (AFP)

Euro-Parliament Head Warns Over Immigration Row

PARIS, France (Feb. 25): A demonstrator is arrested by CRS riot police near the National Assembly in Paris during a demonstration by thousands of people against a law on immigration undergoing its second reading in the Assembly. (AFP PHOTO)

PARIS — The speaker of the European Parliament threatened on Wednesday to cancel a meeting with French Foreign Minister Herve de Charette in a row over a controversial French immigration bill.

Jose Maria Gil-Robles demanded that Herve de Charette clarify remarks criticizing the Euro-Parliament; after Euro-deputies attacked the immigration draft law currently being debated by French deputies.

De Charette "made unacceptable comments about the European Parliament, about its role and its dignity," he said in a statement released in Paris where he is on a visit.

Gil-Robles later held a 30-minute unscheduled meeting with Prime Minister Alain Juppe, but the two men failed to resolve the dispute.

The French Foreign Ministry said later that the meeting between De Charette and Gil-Robles was still on as far as it was concerned, saying the minister was "looking forward to answering possible questions" from the European Parliament speaker.

The French minister said Wednesday morning that the Socialist-majority Strasbourg Assembly "is busying itself over something which has nothing to do with it" — referring to a resolution passed last week calling for the withdrawal of the French immigration bill.

De Charette added: "There are limits which should not be overstepped ... once more the European Parliament has showed itself to be a Parliament which does not merit this name." (AFP)

Grenade Attacks Injure 41 People in Kashmir

JAMMU, India — Unidentified persons hurled a grenade into a crowded Muslim shrine in Jammu-Kashmir on Wednesday, injuring at least 31 persons, police said. In a second attack in another town, a grenade thrown at a bus station injured 10 people.

Most of the victims in the blast in the shrine in the town of Kulgam were children, who had gathered for an annual religious festival to honor a Muslim saint.

Five of the injured were in critical condition in two hospitals in Srinagar, the summer capital, 70 kilometers (40 miles) to the north, police said.

In an earlier attack in the town of Doda, which is mostly populated by Hindus, an unidentified person hurled a grenade in a bus station as police prepared for a visit to the town by state Chief Minister Farooq Abdullah, police said. (AP)

Peru, Guerrillas Wrap Up Sixth Round of Talks

LIMA — Peruvian Marxist guerrillas holding 72 hostages in Lima wrapped up a sixth round of talks with the government on Tuesday, and a source close to doctors attending captives said the rebel leader's mood was darkening.

After negotiations lasting three hours in a Red Cross safehouse, the two sides agreed to continue their talks on Thursday. The Tupac Amaru Revolutionary Movement (MRTA) negotiators were driven back to the besieged Japanese ambassador's residence across the street.

The talks have continued in the same atmosphere as the previous meetings, Archbishop Juan Luis Cipriani, representing the Vatican as one of three guarantors for the negotiations, told reporters in a statement.

The talks will continue on Thursday, he said. The guarantors, who are sworn to secrecy, described earlier meetings as taking place in a constructive atmosphere. (Reuter)

Japan Hosts Asian Version of G7, Focus on Stable Markets

TOKYO — Japan is to host a six-party Asia-Pacific meeting next week to discuss macro-economic and foreign currency issues, with the focus on market stability, Finance Minister Hiroshi Mitsusuka said Tuesday.

Mitsuzuka said senior financial officials from Australia, China, Hong Kong, Japan, Singapore and the United States would take part in the March 4 meeting in Tokyo, with the focus on "stabilization" of financial markets.

Finance ministry officials said the March 4 meeting was a reflection of the international nature of the region's financial markets.

"Asian markets are not local markets any more and it has become important to stabilize foreign exchange markets and the financial systems within this region," a senior official told a briefing.

Mitsuzuka told a regular news conference finance ministers and Central Bank heads would not be involved, but may attend future meetings of the group.

He referred to the meetings as "the Asian version" of the Group of Seven (G7), under which finance ministers and central bankers hold talks on a regular basis, but added it was not clear how often such meetings would occur.

The G7, which groups the United States, Japan, Germany, France, Britain, Italy, and Canada, agreed in Berlin on February 8 on the need for cooperation in maintaining stability in exchange rates.

Japan has been holding meetings similar to the Tokyo gathering with Hong Kong, Singapore and Australia since 1992.

The United States and China were added to the dialogue because the dollar is the key currency in the region, while China has the second largest foreign currency reserves of any country, the officials said.

The senior official said representatives of the six economies were expected to meet periodically, but ministers and central bank heads may also take part.

Asked about the status of Hong Kong's participation, the official said he saw "No problem," even after the return of Hong Kong to China on July 1.

"There should be no problem because the Hong Kong monetary authorities made it clear it will maintain its independent foreign exchange policy, even after the return," the official said.

Officials said that, at this stage, no other Asian countries were expected to participate in future meetings.

A U.S. treasury official said in Washington that Deputy Treasury Secretary, Lawrence Summers, would represent the United States at the meeting, which would "discuss economic policy and financial market issues of mutual interest."

The Yomiuri Shimbun reported Japan would be represented by Vice Finance Minister, Takatoshi Kato, and Bank of Japan Executive Director, Akira Nagashima.

It said people's Bank of China Vice Governor Chen Yuan and a senior official from the Hong Kong monetary authority were also expected to attend.

Senior officials from 11 central banks already meet under great secrecy every six months under the EMEAP framework to discuss Economic and Monetary Developments in East Asia and the Pacific.

EMEAP groups Australia, China, Hong Kong, Indonesia, Japan, South Korea, Malaysia, New Zealand, the Philippines, Singapore and Thailand. (AFP)

Brunei Moves to Diversify Oil-Based Economy

BANDAR SERI BEGAWAN — Sultan Hassanal Bolkiah of Brunei, the world's richest man, has moved to widen the base of the tiny kingdom's oil-based economy with a major increase in development spending.

The 50-year-old sultan disclosed at the weekend that he was allocating 7.2 billion Brunei dollars (5.14 billion U.S.) to finance Brunei's seventh National Development Plan into the next century and to help diversify the economy.

In the previous Five-Year Development Plan, which ended last year, Brunei spent five billion dollars, mainly on roads and highways, a modern telecommunications system and water and power projects.

"It is part of the nation's long-term goal to improve the well-being and quality of life of the people besides (being intended for) attaining higher economic progress," the sultan said of the increase.

In a speech marking National Day on Saturday, the Brunei ruler stressed the need for the country to look outwards and seize the "vast opportunities in the region and in the international arena." He said Brunei's aim was to achieve balanced socio-economic development.

The sultan's remarks reflected concern over Brunei's excessive dependence on its depleting oil wealth and the need to create jobs for locals, especially a growing number of young school leavers.

Brunei, located on Borneo Island, has a population of 280,000, more than a quarter of whom are immigrant laborers working on infrastructure projects.

Oil and gas, which account for more than 95 percent of export revenues, have turned Brunei, which gained independence from Britain in 1984, into one of the world's wealthiest countries.

It produces some 150,000 barrels of oil and 25 million cubic metres (875 million cubic feet) of gas per day, according to published figures.

But present-day oil and gas reserves are expected to last for only about 20 years at current production rates, officials say.

Sultan Hassanal said last year that economic diversification would be based on moves to turn Brunei into a service hub for trade and tourism for the eastern part of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) region.

Brunei, together with the eastern part of Malaysia, the southern Philippines and northern area of Indonesia, comes under the East ASEAN growth area where the nations use their comparative advantages to spur economic growth.

The other ASEAN members are Singapore, Thailand and Vietnam.

Brunei has also set up a state agency to help boost trade and investments, make investments in primary sectors such as fisheries and forestry and in areas like food processing to reduce dependence on imported food.

The sultan, reputedly the richest man in the world with a fortune estimated at more than 30 billion U.S. dollars, is also prime minister and 0efense minister of the nation whose people are predominantly ethnic Malays.

Wielding absolute power over his kingdom, the sultan has stressed the need to equip the country's young people with the skills necessary to generate industries that are value-added and based on high technology.

The Islamic monarchy, whose membership in ASEAN has helped it forge close links with neighbors, has maintained peace and stability since independence from Britain and it emphasises religious values as a concept of government. (AFP)

London Tube Sale to Raise Reinvest £2bn

LONDON — Britain's Transport Minister is set to announce plans for the sale of London's Underground Rail Network for £2 billion which would be reinvested in the system, according to a report in *The Times*.

The report said the plan to be unveiled by Transport Minister Sir George Young on Tuesday and implemented if the conservative are re-elected in this year's general election, would require the proceeds to be ploughed back into rejuvenating the commuter network.

Sale of 'the tube' is being billed by the government as a possible vote winner among London's commuter masses in the election which must be held by May 22.

The two billion price tag mooted by the Times is higher than previous estimates by government insiders. Most recently, Stephen Norris, the former transport minister who is working on the government's election manifesto, told Reuters up to £1.5 billion could be raised from the sale.

Recent press reports said the sale had been delayed by ministers amid public concern that privatization would not include safeguards on prices and service standards.

Addressing this issue is now seen as key to winning public support by government ministers led by Chancellor of the Exchequer Kenneth Clarke, said the Times.

Young is interested in selling the network off under a 10 to 20 year franchise, said the report, with the government retaining ultimate strategic control.

The move will follow the completion of the controversial privatization of Britain's rail network which included the sale of the rail passenger services under a franchising system — seen as a possible model for the underground sale.

Privatization of the underground is expected to be one of the key issues in the ruling conservative party's election manifesto. *The Times* said the manifesto will also include proposals to give the still publicly owned Post Office greater commercial freedom.

But plans to privatize the Post Office and the Channel Four television station have been ditched. Even so the government is still looking to raise £6.5 billion in sell-offs over the next four years, if it wins the election, said the report. (Reuter)

Lebanon to Limit T-Bill Issues, Stabilize Rates

BEIRUT — Lebanon's Central Bank Governor said on Monday the government had enough funds to cover the projected 1997 budget deficit and did not need to attract new sources of finance through its weekly treasury bill auctions.

The statement by Governor Riad Salameh, in a telephone interview with Reuters, amounted to an announcement that the government was ready to curb its massive public borrowing which has strained Lebanon's finances and aroused heavy criticism in parliament.

I can tell you today that the Lebanese government is running sufficient surplus in its creditor account at the Central Bank therefore there is no need to issue more T-bills than those that are maturing, Salameh said.

The weekly auctions will continue in order to roll over maturing securities, but there will be no net increase in borrowing.

The weekly T-bill auctions have been the main source of funding for the public debt which grew 41% in 1996 alone to $10.3 billion under the strain of Prime Minister Rafik al-Hariri's ambitious reconstruction program.

The high yield three-month, six-month, 12-month and two-years T-bills, which are denominated in Lebanese pounds, have been highly popular with local and foreign investors. The balance between new bills and maturing ones were frequently in surplus.

But businessmen and economists have complained that the government's heavy borrowing soaked up liquidity from the economy and starved the private sector of the finance it needs for development.

Salameh emphasized that the surpluses were no longer needed.

We don't need a surplus because the level of the creditor account of the government is sufficient to cover all the projected (budget) deficit for the coming year, he said.

T-bill yields, which have fallen for months, should now stabilize, Salameh added.

We see the rate of interest should stabilize around these levels and decrease in very small incrementals from now on, he said.

Interest rates are now in a range of 13.87-16.14% after dropping from 14.56-21.58% since November.

The bank signaled on Saturday that it wanted rates to stabilize by limiting for the first time the amount of three- and six-month bills it awarded to non-competitive bids — those made by private individuals and foreign investors.

It surprised the market by awarding only 10% and 14% of non-competitive bids for the three- and six-month bills. The bank already awards T-bills on a pro rata basis to competitive bids — those made by Lebanese financial institutions.

Salameh said non-competitive bids for the one- and two-year bills would continue to be allotted in full and bankers said this was to encourage longer-term financing of the debt.

Any monetary authority would prefer long-term to short-term positions for non-residents, so the central bank is more keen to accept two-year bids than three-month bids, a banking source said.

Commercial bankers said Salameh's statement was good for the Lebanese pound and a challenge for the country's banks.

They are saying they don't want to borrow more. It's good news for the Lebanese pound and the market in general. Everyone was calling on the government to stop borrowing, in parliament and outside, a banker told Reuters.

He said the government's aim in limiting T-bill issues, which have been popular with Lebanese banks, was to get them to start lending more to businesses in the economy.

We haven't been doing that because T-bills were more attractive. Now that this avenue is restricted we will look very seriously at lending Lebanese pounds to businesses in the economy, he added. (Reuter)

EU Exchange Rates Are Right

PARIS — Exchange rates within the European Union are now right and there is no need for the rate of the French franc to change, French Finance Minister Jean Arthuis told the government on Wednesday.

Government spokesman and Budget Minister Alain Lamassoure quoted Arthuis as commenting at a weekly cabinet meeting on a record trade surplus in 1996 which was published on Tuesday.

"The very favorable results obtained with our partners in the European Union prove, if proof were needed, that exchange rates within the EU are right and there is no need to change the rate of the franc as some people advised a few months ago," Arthuis said. AFP

EU: U.S. Will Invoke National Security Soon

BRUSSELS — The United States will invoke a National Security Defense of its Helms-Burton Act immediately after the European Union formally presents its case to a World Trade Organization disputes panel, EU diplomats said on Monday.

We have been told by the Americans that as soon as we make our submission, they will invoke national security, said diplomats at a meeting of EU foreign ministers in Brussels.

This will be in about six to eight weeks unless we manage to reach an agreement outside the WTO, one said.

The act — a culmination of years of U.S. policy aimed at isolating the Cuban government of Fidel Castro — was passed last year to a chorus of indignation from the EU and other American allies.

Among other things it allows naturalized Americans to sue in U.S. courts any foreign companies and individuals deemed to have gained from investments in property confiscated by the Cuban government since the Communist Revolution of 1959.

Although this section of the legislation has twice been suspended by president Bill Clinton, the EU is also opposed to another part which prohibits foreigners with links to companies investing in confiscated property from entering the U.S.

Last week WTO Chief Renato Ruggiero named a three-person panel to adjudicate on the matter, but Washington said it would not cooperate and reserved its right to invoke the little-used national security clause in its defense.

Diplomats said on Monday that European Trade Commissioner Sir Leon Brittan told foreign ministers that the U.S. intended invoking that right as soon as the EU submitted its case to the panel.

The delay would allow both sides to continue negotiating a way out of a row that has soured trans-Atlantic relations since the act became law last year.

EU sources said both sides were now focusing on ways to bring about a permanent suspension of the so-called Title III, but the section barring foreigners with links to confiscated property was likely to remain.

This part has become a U.S. law and it would take an act of Congress to overturn, said one diplomat.

Instead, the EU is hoping to negotiate a package of measures that would also see the U.S. clamp down the effects of the so-called D'Amato Legislation which seeks to curb investment in Libya and Iran, considered by Washington to be state sponsors of terrorism.

British Foreign Secretary Malcolm Rifkind told reporters that he did not detect any reservations among his colleagues about the course the EU had taken regarding the Helms-Burton Act, but the 15-nation bloc would continue to seek an agreement with the U.S.

I don't think there are legitimate National Security considerations, but we shall have to wait and see, he said.

An earlier statement by the foreign ministers said the EU would rather resolve the row directly with Washington than have the WTO rule on the matter. (AF)

Romania's King Michael Comes Home

BUCHAREST — Romania's King Michael 1, who returns to his country this week as a fully-fledged citizen for the first time in 50 years, spent most of his life in exile and little time on the throne.

Stripped of his citizenship by the communists 50 years ago, Michael remained a staunch patriot through his long years in exile, committed to a nation that no longer wanted or needed him. That experience appears to have its mark.

Aged 75 today, Michael carries a certain air of sadness and has willfully rejected any desire to step back on the throne.

"I belong to no group, no party, but I belong to all of you," he said, from his home in Switzerland last week. Recalling his coronation oath decades earlier, he added: "This oath obliges me to raise no constitutional or material matters today."

It was only on February 21 this year that the Romanian government restored the citizenship of Michael and his family, opening the way for a grand six-day visit a week later, seen as a bold new step forward on Romania's path to normalcy.

The former monarch and his wife, Ana de Bourbon Parme, live in Versoix, Switzerland, where their home is always open to visiting Romanians. The eldest of their five daughters, Princess Margarita, who recently married a Romanian actor, works with her father.

Born October 25, 1921, in Sinaia, north of Bucharest, Michael was the only son of King Carol II and Helen of Greece, a descendant of the Hohenzollern-Sigmaringen dynasty destined to become the fourth Romanian king.

But he reigned only twice, the first time from 1927 to 1930, when at the age of six he was asked to stand in for his flirtatious father, who had been given the choice of giving up his mistress or giving up the throne.

But in 1930 Carol II returned, grabbed the crown and sent his son to finish his schooling. A few years later, in 1938, Carol abolished the constitution and founded a pro-fascist party, only to be overthrown himself in 1940 by another rightwinger, Marshal Ion Antonescu.

After Carol's abdication, Michael stepped onto the throne for the second time, proclaimed king of Romania during some of the country's darkest days, with Antonescu still at the helm of government.

Antonescu, a hardline rightist, sided with Hitler against the Allies during World War II.

But in 1944, Michael stepped in and restored Romania's pride by arresting Antonescu by surprise in August, 1944, and switching the country's international allegiances.

In 1945, he showed yet more determination, trying to stem the communists by staging a "royal strike" — refusing to rubber-stamp laws and decrees adopted by the communists — at a time when hundreds of thousands of Soviet troops remained stationed in Romania.

But in 1947 he was forced to abdicate and fled to the United States. He was later stripped of his citizenship.

Accused by the ruling communists of robbing the country of some of its wealth, Michael in fact worked as a test pilot for a U.S. firm before being employed as a broker by a New York-based Greek- U.S. company.

After the fall of communist dictator Nicolae Ceausescu late 1989, Michael offered to return as a constitutional monarch if called upon by a democratically-elected Parliament.

Though there is little support for a return to the monarchy in Romania, Michael is personally popular, and received a warm welcome on his only previous return in 1992 to celebrate Orthodox Easter.

Other tries caused him nothing but humiliation. He was not authorized to disembark twice at Bucharest airport for lack of a visa, and other attempts to return failed when his entourage felt conditions imposed by the government were unacceptable.

Voting to restore his citizenship, the government said "We can consider that neither Michael nor his family were ever stripped of their citizenship." But it added that this did not alter the country's constitution, meaning that Michael would not be able to reclaim the throne.

"King Michael's visit is an important step towards the normalization of this country. All the nations in our part of the world have already made this sort of conciliatory gesture and it was high time for Romania to do the same thing," Prime Minister Victor Ciorbea told foreign journalists.

"It was absurd that someone of his stature be forbidden from coming to Romania," he added.

(AFP)

Australia to Sell Rights to Jurassic Tree

SYDNEY — The world rights to Australia's unique wollemi pine, a prehistoric tree that was discovered growing near here three years ago, will be sold to ensure its survival, authorities said Wednesday.

The New South Wales state government plans to sell the rights to propagate and market seedlings of the tree, which has been described as the botanical equivalent of a living dinosaur.

The proposal means that within three years gardeners will have access to seedlings grown from the single existing stand of the 150 million-year-old trees.

Environment Minister Pam Allan said the move to encourage private sector involvement would ensure that the rare plants, which dated back to the time of the dinosaurs, did not become extinct.

"There is currently only a single stand of trees in one remote location in the wild," she said in a statement.

"Having seedlings distributed to botanical and private gardens will ensure a healthy population."

About 40 wollemi pines, previously thought extinct, were discovered in 1994 in the Blue Mountains, just a three-hour drive and a day's walk from downtown Sydney.

The location of the trees, in a near-inaccessible rainforest gorge, remains a closely guarded secret although the site is known to have been discovered and damaged by some intruders.

The tree's existence was previously known only through fossils and its closest relatives are believed to be extinct plants from the Jurassic and Cetaceous periods between 65 to 200 million years ago.

Horticulturalists have grown 500 plants from cuttings and seeds since the wollemi pine was discovered.

Allen said a number of international and state forestry bodies showed an interest in growing the species as a softwood plantation timber.

(AFP)

Dutch City Searches for Marijuana 'Entrepreneurs'

PURMEREND, Netherlands — Wanted: marijuana merchants to open new drug cafes. Restaurant experience and respect for the law required. Discretion a plus. Apply to City Hall.

Officials in this Amsterdam suburb said Tuesday they'll run newspaper advertisements this week seeking "entrepreneurs" to operate the city's two new drug shops.

Authorities say the shops will reduce the underground trade in illicit drugs, giving them greater control over it.

Unlike in the Dutch capital of Amsterdam, where nearly 400 privately owned coffee shops openly sell marijuana and hashish, Purmerend's drug trade is largely underground — operating through private homes and telephone "hotlines."

"We want to put a halt to that kind of trading," said City Hall spokesman Fred Beijert. The aim of the new shops, he said, is to keep drug sales in the open where police can better monitor and control them, and to prevent such sales to minors.

In the Netherlands, so-called soft drugs such as hashish and marijuana are still illegal, but authorities allow privately owned "coffee shops" to sell small amounts for personal use without fear of prosecution.

Beijert wouldn't say where the drugs will come from, and he stressed that the city will not get involved with the supply side of the business.

He said ads announcing the application process for the shops in Purmerend, about 15 kilometers (9 miles) north of Amsterdam, would be placed in regional and local newspapers on Thursday.

Applicants must have a "plan of action" on how they will minimize the noise and nuisance that usually come with coffee shops, Beijert said.

They also must specify what kind of information they will provide to customers on the health hazards of drug use, and they must have restaurant experience.

Beijert said a special selection committee will choose the entrepreneurs who will receive an official letter from the mayor permitting them to set up shop.

Several other Dutch towns gained notoriety recently by going into the drug business and opening City Hall-sponsored marijuana cafes.

(AP)

Army of God Claims Atlanta Bombings

ATLANTA — An anonymous letter purported to be from a militant Christian group called the Army of God has claimed responsibility for the recent bombings of an abortion clinic and a nightclub here.

Mailed to an international news agency hours after Friday night's explosion at a bar, the letter claimed to contain details about the makeup of bombs used in both attacks.

Its author also sought to set up a system by which claims of responsibility for future bombings could be confirmed.

The FBI could not say immediately whether the letter was genuine. "At this point we're just evaluating it, said Jay Spadafore," an FBI spokesman.

But investigators said they were aware of a radical anti-abortion group called the Army of God, which has been known to circulate bomb-making manuals as a means of advocating violence against abortion clinics.

Meanwhile, CNN reported that a separate claim of responsibility was phoned in to the gay yellow pages in Phoenix, Arizona, by an anonymous female caller who said she represented a Los Angeles-based neo-Nazi group known as the Sons of the Confederate Klan.

The Army of God letter threatened total war against the federal government and promised further attacks on homosexuals, their organizations and supporters.

In a reference to abortion, it lashed out at what it called the annual murder of 3.5 million children, saying the practice would not be tolerated.

Meanwhile, the FBI, which has raised the possibility that a single bomber was at large in Atlanta, said there were distinct similarities between the bomb that injured five people at a nightclub last weekend and the mid-January double-bombing at the Atlanta Family Planning Services Center in the suburb of Sandy Springs.

Investigators cautioned it was too early to conclude that both attacks were the work of the same person or group, saying a federal crime lab had yet to issue forensic reports on the two bombs that exploded at the nightclub.

The FBI said on Saturday that the explosion at the Otherside Lounge in northeast Atlanta was similar enough to the abortion clinic bombing and last July's pipe bomb attack at Centennial Olympic Park for investigators to suspect that a serial bomber could be at work.

(Reuter)

Albanian Girl a Winner Despite Pyramid Chaos

TIRANA — In a country full of financial losers, an Albanian Gypsy girl has become a rare winner after buying a lucky lottery ticket.

Bianka Vucina, aged seven, won $7,000 — nearly 10 years' pay for an average Albanian — after praying to Allah to help her.

The grandmother she lives with has $5,000 trapped in frozen accounts at companies hit by a pyramid investment scandal which has ruined thousands of Albanians.

After a month of national misery, Bianka's good fortune is in stark contrast to that of the crowds which gather for daily protests after losing their savings in the get-rich-quick scams which collapsed last month.

Bianka was abandoned by her parents when a baby and lives with her grandmother Hava in a small apartment in a Tirana suburb.

She bought her lucky ticket with her grandmother after the pair left the offices of Vefa, where $4,000 of the grandmother's savings are frozen in an account. She has $1,000 frozen in another scheme.

They had been checking to see whether Hava's name was on a list of investors who are expected to get their money back. It wasn't.

It was the raven-haired, chatty Bianka who convinced her grandmother to try the national lottery, picking three tickets and marking them with her initial B to distinguish them from her grandmother's 12 tickets.

She told Reuters television she had prayed to Allah for help: "please help me win 'telebingo'. I am with you and you are with me. Forgive me any mistakes."

Bianka also asked that her pregnant mother, married to a Tunisian in Italy, give birth to a baby boy and that she get an outfit like that worn by her Japanese cartoon heroine, Sailor Moon.

She also said she had dreamed of chatting with an angel who had promised that her wishes would be granted.

What will she do with her money?

"I want to buy a mermaid doll and give it to my mother, grandmother and grandfather," she said.

Hava said they would sell their little apartment and buy one, at Bianka's request, with a bath.

'Telebingo' is a nationally-televised lottery which has taken over from the failed pyramids as the most popular way of trying to get rich quick. Its prizes go up to $70,000.

Thousands of Albanians sank millions of dollars into five pyramid schemes which went broke in January. Investment firms such as Vefa then froze their clients' accounts, fearing a rush of panic withdrawals.

(Reuter)

Brazil Police Arrest Suspect in Teen Killings

RIO DE JANEIRO — Brazilian police arrested one of two men suspected of shooting and killing five teenagers because they did not pay a 50-cent bus fare, a police spokesman said.

The bodies of the boys, aged 15 to 17, were found on Friday in Belford Roxo, a suburb of Rio de Janeiro they all had fatal head wounds.

The police spokesman said the five probably were killed by two security guards employed by a bus company because they were rowdy and refused to pay the fare.

He said the two men forced the victims off the bus after the ticket seller complained that the boys did not want to pay.

The second suspect in the shooting, who was still at large, was believed to be involved with death squads, the police spokesman said.

(Reuter)

Mother Teresa Will Not Be Pressured Against Her Will

CALCUTTA — A close associate of Mother Teresa argued here Wednesday the Nobel laureate would not be pressured into continuing as the head of the Missionaries of Charity Order she founded.

"I don't think so. It would be very unfair on her. I don't think the sisters would do that," the friend, Sunita Kumar, said.

The Press Trust of India, quoting sources close to Mother Teresa, reported Tuesday she would be re-elected as superior general.

An electoral college of 126 senior nuns from around the world is meeting to elect a new head of the order. The elections began with a retreat on January 16.

Mother Teresa, who has been in and out of hospital since August with life-threatening heart problems, malaria and pneumonia, is reportedly determined to give up the post which she has held since establishing the order in 1950.

Kumar said the 86-year-old missionary remained firm on stepping down and the elections were nearing an end.

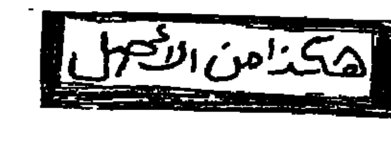
"They are going to choose a successor very soon. It has to be done now but ... the sisters have not told me anything timewise."

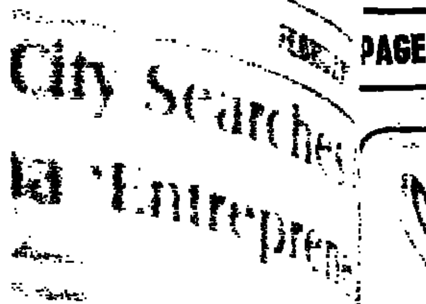
A senior nun from the order, meanwhile, said the electoral college was debating a change in the order's structure, by making Mother Teresa titular head and having two top jobs in place of one.

Mother Teresa was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 1979 for her missionary work.

She first asked to give up her post as head of the order seven years ago but was re-elected. She also wanted to quit in 1994 but was persuaded to carry on by the pope.

(AFP)

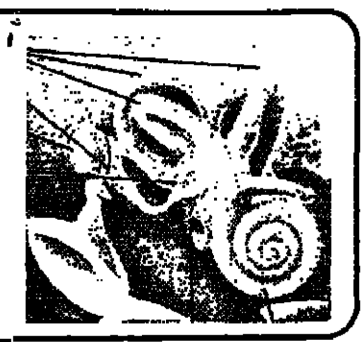












How a Child's Brain Develops

PART 5

Experience Kicks in

When a baby is born, it can see and hear and smell and respond to touch, but only dimly. The brain stem, a primitive region that controls vital functions like heartbeat and breathing, has completed its wiring. Elsewhere the connections between neurons are wispy and weak. But over the first few months of life, the brain's higher centers explode with new synapses. And as dendrites and axons swell with buds and branches like trees in spring, metabolism soars. By the age of two, a child's brain contains twice as many synapses and consumes twice as much energy as the brain of a normal adult.

University of Chicago pediatric neurologist Dr. Peter Huttenlocher has chronicled this extraordinary epoch in brain development by autopsying the brains of infants and young children who have died unexpectedly. The number of synapses in one layer of the visual cortex, Huttenlocher reports, rises from around 2,500 per neuron at birth to as many as 18,000 about six months later. Other regions of the cortex score similarly spectacular increases but on slightly different schedules. And while these microscopic connections between nerve fibers continue to form throughout life, they reach their highest average densities (15,000 synapses per neuron) at around the age of two and remain at that level until the age of 10 or 11.

This profusion of connections lends the growing brain exceptional flexibility and resilience. Consider the case of 13-year-old Brandi Binder, who developed such severe epilepsy that surgeons at UCLA had to remove the entire right side of her cortex when she was six. Binder lost virtually all the control she had established over muscles on the left side of her body, the side controlled by the right side of the brain. Yet today, after years of therapy ranging from leg lifts to math and music drills, Binder is a top student at the Holmes Middle School in Colorado Springs, Colorado. She loves music, math and art — skills usually associated with the right half of the brain. And while Binder's recuperation is not 100% — for example, she has never regained the use of her left arm — it comes close. Says UCLA pediatric neurologist Dr. Donald Shields: "If there's a way to compensate, the developing brain will find it."

What wires a child's brain, say neuroscientists — or rewires it after physical trauma — is repeated experience. Each time a baby tries to touch a tantalizing object or gazes intently at a face or listens to a lullaby, tiny bursts of electricity shoot through the brain, knitting neurons into circuits as well defined as those etched onto silicon chips. The results are those behavioral mileposts that never cease to delight and awe parents. Around the age of two months, for example, the motor-control centers of the brain develop to the point that infants can suddenly reach out and grab a nearby object. Around the age of four months, the cortex begins to refine the connections needed for depth perception and binocular vision. And around the age of 12 months, the speech centers of the brain are poised to produce what is perhaps the most magical moment of childhood: the first word that marks the flowering of language.



When the brain does not receive the right information — or shuts it out — the result can be devastating. Some children who display early signs of autism, for example, retreat from the world because they are hypersensitive to sensory stimulation, others because their senses are underactive and provide them with too little information. To be effective, then, says George Washington University's Greenspan, treatment must target the underlying condition, protecting some children from disorienting noises and lights, providing others with attention-grabbing stimulation. But when parents and therapists collaborate in an intensive effort to reach these abnormal brains, writes, Greenspan in a new book, *The Growth of the Mind* (Addison-Wesley, 1997), three-year-olds who begin the descent into the autistic's limited universe can sometimes be snatched back.

Indeed, parents are the brain's first and most important teachers. Among other things, they appear to help babies learn by adopting the rhythmic, high-pitched speaking style known as Parentese. When speaking to babies, Stanford University psychologist Anne Fernald has found, mothers and fathers from many cultures change their speech patterns in the same peculiar ways. "They put their faces very close to the child," she reports. "They use shorter utterances, and they speak in an unusually melodious fashion." The heart rate of infants increases while listening to Parentese, even Parentese delivered in a foreign language. Moreover, Fernald says, Parentese appears to hasten the process of connecting words to the objects they denote. Twelve-month-olds, directed to "look at the ball" in Parentese, direct their eyes to the correct picture more frequently than when the instruction is delivered in normal English.

(To be contd)

THOUGHT

SOMEONE falls into the pit who leads another into it.

Spanish Proverb

PRAYER

Noon	12:17
Evening	18:19
Dawn (tomorrow)	05:03
Sunrise (tomorrow)	06:35

WHO Announces Influenza Vaccine for 1997/98

TEHRAN — The composition of the influenza vaccine for the 1997/1998 season was announced on Feb. 24, at a meeting of international experts held at the World Health Organization (WHO) headquarters in Geneva.

WHO said three main antigenic types of influenza viruses are currently circulating among the world's population. According to the agency, these viruses all have a remarkable capacity to change their antigenic characteristics from year to year. The viruses are known as A (H1N1), A (H3N2) and B, and composed of two influenza strains of type A and one type B strain. The agency said the latest formula recommended by WHO is: an A/Wuhan/359/95 (H3N2) — like strain; an A/Bayern/7/95 (H1N1) like strain; and a B/Beijing/184/93 — like strain.

Scientists are constantly challenged to identify major emerging strains of influenza viruses, so that effective vaccines can be devised each year, according to WHO. It said that in comparison to last year's recommendations for the vaccine, one of the three influenza vaccine components had been changed.

"So far during the 1996 — 1997 influenza season, several countries have reported moderate to severe influenza epidemics. The epidemics in many countries reached a peak around the end of December 1996 or during January 1997," WHO said.

(Courtesy United Nations Information Center)

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G2 E1 I1 I1 L1 R1 N1		RACK 1
blank U1 N1 M3 G2 G2 I1	Double Word Score	RACK 2
F4 I1 I1 C3 C3 P3 A1	Double Word Score	RACK 3
M3 T1 T1 E1 O1 N1 R1		RACK 4

PAR SCORE 140-150

by JUDD

FOUR RACK TOTAL ____
TIME LIMIT: 20 MIN

DIRECTIONS: Make a 2- to 7- letter word from the letters in each row. To total points of your words, use scoring directions to right of each row. 7-letter words get 50-point bonus. "Blanks" used as any letter have no point value. All Judd's words can be found in OSW Official Scrabble Words (Chambers). JUDD'S SOLUTION TOMORROW

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SCRABBLE BRAND GRAMS SOLUTION BY JUDD

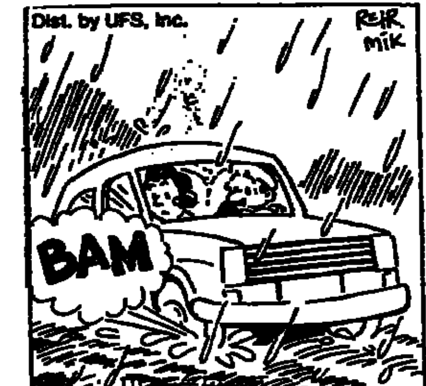
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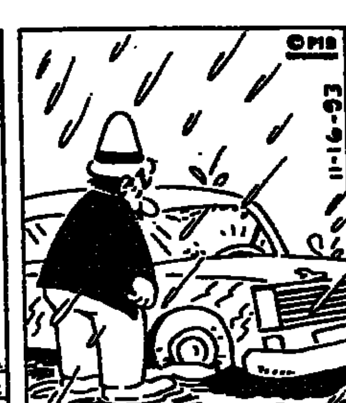
Word	Rack	Score
H4 O1 R1 S1 E1 S1	RACK 1	9
D2 E1 P3 U1 T1 Y4	RACK 2	12
A1 T1 O1 M3 I1 C3	RACK 3	13
G2 A1 N1 D2 E1 R1 S1	RACK 4	77
PAR SCORE 70-80	JUDD'S TOTAL	111

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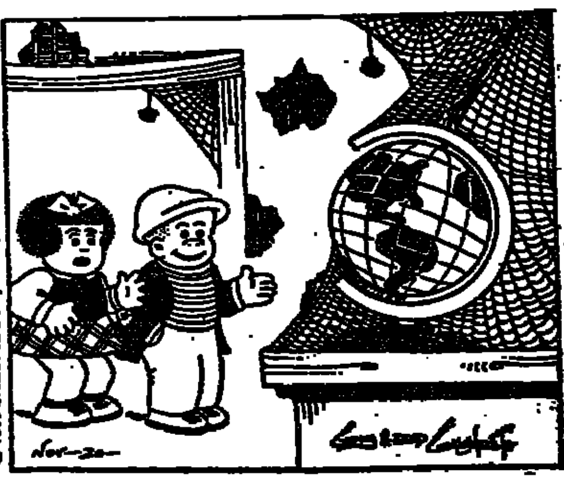


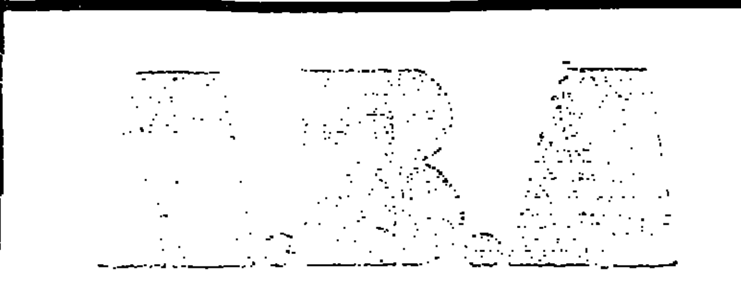


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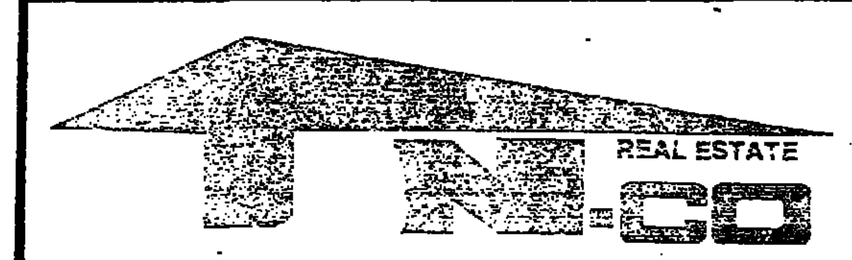






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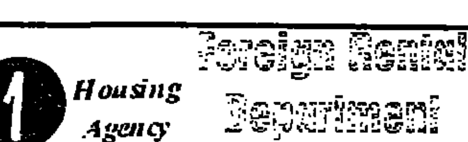
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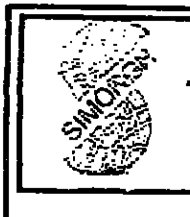
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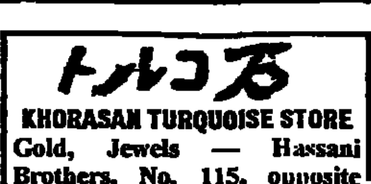
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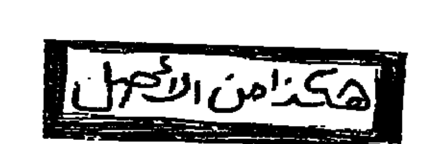
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Serbia Facing Spring of Discontent

BELGRADE — Serbia's political turmoil may have subsided for now but the protests could turn into social and economic unrest, posing problems for President Slobodan Milosevic and the opposition alike, commentators say.

The opposition, which inspired thousands of people to march daily for three cold months to demand recognition of its gains in local elections, has won its first battle.

But the next fight may well be longer and tougher, and has the potential to wreck Milosevic's political future.

Teachers are striking across Serbia for higher wages and demanding to be paid salaries dating from December. Commentators see this as the tip of an iceberg, pointing to possible general strikes later this year.

We are going to have social and economic marches, the teachers' protest is a clear sign of it. The nature of protest is going to change from political to economic, and I see it coming soon. This will be the spring of Serbian discontent, said Zarko Korac, an opposition member of the Serbian Parliament and psychology professor at Belgrade University.

First we have teachers asking for their salaries. The whole economy has been idle, big industrial plants have been out of work for some years. We are feeling the impact now, though a bit late, of economic sanctions, said Sonja Biserko of the Helsinki Committee of Human Rights.

It is the same problem for Milosevic and for the opposition. The country has been drained by sanctions and its war policy. People have expressed the will for change but we now lack the material basis to go through with that change.

The opposition, in the form of a three-party coalition called Zajedno (together), took control of Belgrade Council on Friday, ending the socialists' 50-year rule of the city. One of its co-leaders Zoran Djindjic was elected mayor.

Tensions between the three party leaders have already started to show and observers say it is only a matter of time before Milosevic tries to tear the coalition apart.

So far it has revealed no clear program and has little experience of being in power – leaders admitted on Friday the reality was far more frightening than the dream.

It faces a daunting task in a city flooded with refugees from Bosnia's 43-month war, with a collapsing public transport system, housing problems and massive unemployment.

One Zajedno leader Vuk Draskovic said: We found empty coffers, the economy is in a catastrophic situation. Hungry people are demonstrating in the streets and there are going to be more and more of them.

But Zajedno's hands may be tied, relying on transfers of money from the government. The Federal and Serbian governments could create serious problems for the coalition by denying financial assistance and budget allocations.

But if (the government) really wanted to undermine the city, the people will march, said Korac.

If Milosevic wants to survive politically, he will have to find a solution to Serbia's financial crisis. Economists say the republic has virtually no foreign reserves and unofficial estimates say up to half the labor force is out of work.

Milosevic may try to find a quick solution, by selling off infrastructure to enable him to pay salaries, but his party is discredited and Serbia needs a long-term solution.

He's cornered and I don't see a way out. .. Historically he is dead, said Kora. *(Reuter)*

Bulgaria's Interim Cabinet Wins Back Confidence

SOFIA — Bulgaria's caretaker cabinet, appointed after a month of street protests against the rule of the ex-communist socialists, can do little to rescue the collapsing economy before elections in April.

But by winning back Bulgarians' confidence in their government, it is helping to prepare the ground for the electorate to accept tough future reforms.

Interim Prime Minister Stefan Sofianski, who took office on February 13, makes frequent appearances to explain Bulgaria's problems and how he hopes to resolve them – a very different style from his socialist predecessor Zhan Videnov, who was rarely seen until the final weeks of his government.

It's an end to the arrogance of power, said Ivan Krustev of the independent center for liberal strategies. Sofianski is playing the good son trying to help his family.

Apart from tackling severe bread and fuel shortages, one of the government's main tasks is to attract external funding suspended because of the socialists' failure to carry out promised reforms.

A World Bank mission is currently in Sofia, and International Monetary Fund (IMF) negotiators are due next week.

The European Union meets in Brussels to discuss mobilizing support.

The IMF will discuss preparations for a currency board, a tough fixed exchange rate regime which will halt the collapse of the lev but will severely restrict government social spending and bring new job losses.

The main opposition Union of Democratic Forces (UDF), which is expected to win a majority in Parliament, currently enjoys strong support after its campaign against the socialists.

But elections are still two months away, and polls show the protests were fuelled more by economic hardship and opposition to the socialists than by support for the UDF.

The question is not so much how big their majority is as how stable it is, Krustev said.

The UDF is negotiating with its allies on whether to put up joint lists of candidates. It has said it wants primary elections to pick regional candidates, but it is not clear whether it has either the money or the time to organize them.

Opinion polls put support for the socialists at an all-time low but they are expected to claw back some votes by the election to form a substantial minority in Parliament.

They face some competition from the new Euro-left movement, grouping socialist dissidents and smaller leftist parties, which held its founding meeting on Saturday, electing as chairman liberal Marxist Alexander Tomov, who came fourth in November's presidential election.

The Euro-left has three prominent former socialist deputies in its leadership but has just two months to mobilize enough support to poll at least the four percent minimum for entering Parliament after general elections on April 19.

The interim cabinet has said clearly that it supports the IMF's currency board proposal, that it will crack down on corruption and that it does not want Bulgaria to miss the boat on NATO expansion, an issue on which the socialists were ambivalent.

Interior Minister Bogomil Bonev has ordered an investigation into cases of civil servants acquiring unearned income or property which did not correspond to their wages.

Members of the former socialist administration have been banned from traveling abroad, and Bonev has replaced senior Interior Ministry staff and cancelled all leave.

Bonev told a news conference the former government had been unable to fight corruption because it was too closely linked to those involved. *(Reuter)*



VATICAN CITY, Vatican City State: (Feb. 24): Pope John Paul II (L) and Lebanese Prime Minister Rafic Hariri shake hands before their meeting at the Vatican. Hariri is on an official visit to Italy. *(AFP PHOTO)*

Job-Seekers in Bahrain Stand at 4,500

ABU DHABI — Bahrain's Labor and Social Affairs Minister Abdel-Nabi al-Shula said 4,500 Bahrainis, mostly new university graduates, were seeking jobs in the small Persian Gulf Arab island.

He also said Bahrain had no real unemployment problem as two-thirds of job-seekers remained without jobs for only six months in a labor market that absorbs 6,500 a year.

Manama has embarked on an ambitious vocational training program to find more jobs for Bahrainis to combat rising unemployment that has helped fuel sporadic anti-government unrest since December 1994.

Bahrain has no unemployment problem in terms of the criterion used in other countries. .. It is more of a problem of integrating the national workforce in the labor market, Shula told a news conference after talks in the United Arab Emirates (UAE) to boost labor and social affairs cooperation.

It is masked unemployment as there are 130,000 jobs held by foreigners in Bahrain.

Bahrain, the least wealthy country in the oil-rich Persian Gulf region but a business and banking hub, has a population of 518,243, of whom 223,928 are foreigners.

Shula put unemployment at two percent — in a total workforce of 239,000.

Independent economists have put the figure at 10 to 15 percent. Most of the jobless come from the island's majority Shia Muslim community who live in villages that have been at the center of protests that erupted over two years ago.

The protesters say they are demanding economic reforms, including more jobs as well as the restoration of Parliament dissolved in 1975 by the Sunni Muslim government.

Shula said the government's drive to Bahrainize the workforce by increasing the number of its nationals in the private sector that is heavily dominated by expatriates had reaped major gains.

Now Bahrainis hold 70 percent of jobs in banks, 95 percent in telecommunications and 95 percent in the aluminium sector, added the minister who arrived in Abu Dhabi on Saturday.

Bahrainis in the private sector now stand at 35 percent which is a much better percentage than that in other Persian Gulf countries, Shula said.

The UAE and Bahrain are members of the PGCC, a political and economic alliance that also groups Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Oman and Kuwait.

Other PGCC states have also begun a drive to find jobs for their citizens and reduce reliance on expatriates.

A Persian Gulf official said in December foreign workers accounted for more than 80 percent, and in some cases 90 percent, of laborers in some PGCC countries. *(Reuter)*

Witness's Retraction Deals Blow to Case Against Andreotti

PALERMO, Italy — One of the main prosecution witnesses in the trial of former Italian Prime Minister Giulio Andreotti for alleged links with the Mafia went back on his testimony Monday.

Francesco Filippazzo dealt a blow to the prosecution case when he denied that he had said during questioning in 1995 that he had seen Andreotti at the wedding of Angela Salvo, daughter of Mafia member Nino Salvo.

The prosecution claims that Cousins Nino and Ignazio Salvo acted for the Mafia in dealings with Italy's Christian Democrat Party in the shape of European member of Parliament Salvo Lima, a close political ally of Andreotti.

Andreotti has always denied ever having met the Salvo Cousins.

Filippazzo, who was Lima's personal chauffeur, said he had confused two receptions while being questioned by the authorities in 1995. He had not reread the official account of his statements because he was tired after ten hours of interrogation.

In fact, Filipazzo said, he had not seen Andreotti at the wedding reception in August 1981 at the Zagarella Hotel in Palermo.

Andreotti, 78, said prosecution witnesses had frequently made mistakes about dates in describing his activities.

He said that in a series of instances witnesses had claimed he was in sicily on days when he was either in Parliament in Rome, or in Strasbourg, or in the office of the Italian president, or at Christian Democrat Party meetings. *(AFP)*

Yeltsin Signals His Full Return to the Political Fray

MOSCOW — Russian President Boris Yeltsin, looking better than at any time since he was reelected last summer, looks set for a return to full-time work in the Kremlin after nearly eight months battling ill health.

Yeltsin, who has been recovering from heart problems and then pneumonia, declared himself fighting fit on Sunday and looked well in his first public appearance for weeks.

Although he has lost weight and his long-term ability to rule remains in doubt, the 66-year-old president has shown clear signs of improvement in the past week.

It seems that this week has seen a breakthrough in the process of the president's recovery, influential television presenter Yevgeny Kiselyov said in Sunday's edition of the weekly current affairs program, *Itogi*.

Like it or not, even Yeltsin's biggest enemies will probably have to acknowledge after this that today we saw the president we saw before his illness.

Yeltsin's full return to the political fray has been much anticipated since he dropped out of sight just before he was reelected on July 3 last year.

His first attempt at a comeback from heart surgery collapsed when he went down with pneumonia of both lungs in January, but he has gradually been stepping up his visits to the Kremlin since he left hospital on January 20.

Even now he is a shadow of the man who became president in 1991 and his health faces two big tests – his delivery of an annual policy speech to Parliament on March 6 and a summit with U.S. President Bill Clinton in Helsinki on March 20-21.

Kremlin sources say they are confident he is well enough to address Parliament for about 30 minutes and that his health will allow him to fly to Helsinki, dismissing suggestions that he might only be up to taking the train.

Yeltsin's clear aim in returning to a normal routine will be to show he is back at the helm in Russia. He will also hope to show his political foes that the race to succeed him is a long distance event and not a sprint, and to ridicule their efforts to amend the constitution to water down his vast powers or to oust him.

His return to health makes an early presidential election less probable, said Andrei Piontkowski, head of the Center for Strategic Studies Think-Tank. All political life in the last two months has been concentrated on this one thing. This activity will not cease but it will at least calm down.

Piontkowski said presidential challengers such as ousted Security Adviser Alexander Lebed, who is demanding Yeltsin's removal and putting himself forward for the presidency, would now

(Contd on Pg.14)

To Clone Or Not to Clone?

WASHINGTON — To clone or not to clone? Imaginations around the world ran wild exploring possibilities as debate on laboratory copying of large mammals spilled from academia into mainstream society.

As scientists digested news that researchers in Scotland successfully cloned an adult sheep, politicians took up the issue with some hailing it as a major technological breakthrough and others decrying it as sacrilege.

In the United States, where no law specifically prohibits human cloning, President Bill Clinton ordered a special panel to review the ethical implications of the breakthrough.

Meanwhile a German government official called for a ban on human clone research and the head of a Canadian government bioethics panel called for urgent action to prevent the genetic manipulation of humans.

Ian Wilmut, the 52-year-old embryologist who led the Roslin Institute team that successfully cloned a sheep named "Dolly" from a single cell of a ewe's udder, told a press conference that cloning humans was "probably" possible but welcomed Clinton's call for an ethics review.

"We can't see a clinical reason why you would do this," Wilmut said of human cloning. "We would all find it ethically completely unacceptable and would not do it and in fact it is illegal in the UK already."

Wilmut's team said the cloning breakthrough would be beneficial in understanding human and animal diseases like cystic fibrosis, emphysema and bovine spongiform encephalopathy, or "mad cow" disease.

Wilmut added, "We are delighted to see that President Clinton is getting people to think about it."

"While this technological advance could offer potential benefits in such areas as medical research and agriculture, it also raises serious ethical questions, particularly with respect to the possible use of this technology to clone human embryos," Clinton said in requesting a review by the National Bioethics Advisory Commission.

"It's a very troubling subject," said White House spokesman Michael McCurry, adding that Clinton was prompted to action by "the very startling news from Scotland."

In Germany, Research Minister Juergen Ruettgers said, "There should not be and there will not be a human clone," adding that there should be no doubts about the ethics of the matter.

In Canada, Patricia Baird, president of a royal commission of inquiry on new reproduction techniques, said, "It's worrying, because this is one very vivid instance of why we need limits and an accountable management system in the whole area of new reproductive technologies."

In France, the National Institute for Agricultural Research said it was "resolutely opposed to any use of cloning techniques on humans," adding "We can imagine all kinds of slip-ups."

Jean-Francois Mattei, a member of France's National Bioethics Commission, called for the United Nations to establish international rules on the matter.

But others maintained that cloning may be acceptable and important for matters of agricultural research.

"It's been what animal breeders have always wanted to do," said Jack Rutledge, chairman of Animal Sciences Department at University of Wisconsin. "The advantage of the process is that potentially you could clone an individual hundreds of times or thousands of times."

In the United States, a current ban on using federal money for human embryo research would prevent cloning research in laboratories supported by federal funds, but private labs could go ahead with it unless Congress stepped in, according to officials.

"But if cloning is possible in other countries, it would be hard to prevent Americans from leaving the United States to take advantage of it," said Alexander Capron, a member of the presidential panel and professor of law and medicine at the University of Southern California. (AFP)



EDINBURGH, United Kingdom (February 26): Dr. Ron James (L), managing director of PPL Therapeutics at the Roslin Institute, Edinbourgh discusses with Dr. Lan Wilmuth the world's first adult animal cloned through nuclear transfer February 23. The team claim the breakthrough will help in understanding human and animal diseases like cystic fibrosis, emphysema, BSE and CJD.

(AFP PHOTO)

British Women Eye History in Polar Quest

LONDON — They are 20 ordinary women aiming for the extraordinary — to be the first all-female expedition to trek overland to the top of the world.

Their journey to the North Pole will take them across 1,000 km (620 miles) of frozen ocean as they drag 55 kg (120 lb) sleds over razor-sharp ridges of ice.

The women are not veteran adventurers but housewives, teachers, financiers, a policewoman, even a great niece of the Queen Mother. Their ages range from 21 to 50 and one is the mother of two-year-old triplets.

"They are all very ordinary women who see this as the opportunity of a lifetime to achieve something special," said 33-year-old Caroline Hamilton, a London-based film financier who has spearheaded the expedition, which the women believe is the largest to the pole.

On reaching the pole, the women will not find a distinct landmark. Ice floes on the ocean that covers the point shift constantly.

"That is the beauty of it. My North Pole will be different from anyone else's," said Hamilton. "There is a sheer exhilaration from surviving in those kinds of conditions."

Twenty-six-year-old Victoria Riches, who will be joined on the polar ice cap by her mother Sue, explained her motivation for joining an all-women endeavor: "We all like to think we are as strong as men, but are we? That's what this is all about — proving we are the same and can do it.

"When I told my mother I was doing it, she said, 'Excellent, I'm going with you. Just don't tell your father'."

Hamilton approached a British travel agency specializing in Arctic voyages last year. She decided she wanted to make history with an all-women team and then had to find 19 others willing to share the risk.

News of the plan spread quickly, and Hamilton received more than 200 inquiries. "If it had not been an all women's trip, most of them would probably have been scared away. Too often women are just token members of an expedition and not the most important part," she said.

Survival of the Fittest

Over two intensive survival weekends, the aspirants were whittled down to the chosen 20.

The final selection test consisted of an absolutely hellish two-day outing on the English moors modelled on training by the Special Air Service (SAS), Britain's elite military commandos.

Nearly everyone, save two hypothermia victims, finished the first weekend unscathed. But during the second — which featured night runs and swimming in freezing waters with a rucksack - the women began to crack.

"We had to push them to the limits because so much of this trip is going to be mental, not physical. It's about pushing on, never letting up," said Hamilton.

The women will split into five groups of four and form a relay team, led by two professional female guides, to cross the frozen ocean separating their base camp on the tip of Canada's northwest territories from the North Pole.

The first team leaves London for Canada's Resolute Bay on Friday and, after a week of training, sets out on the first leg of the journey.

The last group must reach its goal by the end of May, when warming weather begins to make the ice floes dangerous.

Since their selection, the women have undergone intensive physical training. Some have gained nearly a stone (14 lb) in muscle.

"We work as a team and are there for one another, no matter how difficult it might get. That is a great comfort," said Rose Agnew, a teacher in London and one of two 50-year-olds on the expedition.

"But the nearer it looms, the more realistic your thoughts become. We are headed to the Arctic. I worry, am I strong enough to keep going? How will I cope with the cold? How will it actually feel?"

Victoria's mother Sue, who battled cancer several years ago and at 50 is the oldest member of the expedition, echoed many of her teammates' fears of being the one person to hold the group back, but drew comfort in the experience that comes with age.

"The older you get, the more you can just keep going. I might not have the speed of a 30-year-old, but mentally I am very strong. I'm not that worried about the cold because I've been told women have an extra layer of fat than men. We should be all right. We're very tough."

"But a man could be useful on the trip," she added. "We joke that our luxury would be to have one in our sleeping bags to help keep us warm."

(Reuter)

Scientists Manipulate Plant Genes to Grow Supercrops

CHESTERFIELD, Missouri — Young scientists at Monsanto Co.'s research center here are firing particle guns to blast genetic material into plant embryos in order to grow improved varieties of wheat or corn.

Other researchers are using a naturally occurring bacterium called as an alternative route to introduce desirable genetic traits into plants, such as built-in resistance to herbicides or insecticides.

It's all part of cutting-edge biotechnology work on a wide range of crops — soybean, corn, potatoes, cotton or oilseed rape — being conducted at this 100-hectare (250-acre) facility, nestled in the wooded hills of eastern Missouri, 40 kilometers (25 miles) west of St. Louis.

Despite vociferous opposition from environmentalist groups, Monsanto, a chemical giant turned biotechnology pioneer, is pressing ahead with genetic manipulation to develop soybeans and cotton that are unaffected by its popular roundup herbicide brand and to produce insect-resistant corn and disease-resistant wheat.

"There are very good means of dealing with crop pests. Genetic engineering is not one of them," said Chicago-based Greenpeace spokesman Beth Fitzgerald, who warned that Monsanto's genetically altered "roundup ready" soybeans (RRS) could cause allergies in humans as well as "genetic pollution" of natural plants.

Soybean oil and protein are contained in 60 percent of all processed foods.

"Monsanto is creating organisms that would never occur naturally even through cross-breeding. They're taking a gamble with the environment, with animal and human health," Fitzgerald told AFP.

"Nonsense," retorted Monsanto spokeswoman Karen Marshall. "If you take our soybean for example, we made more than 1,80C tests over a 10-year period. It has been approved by regulatory authorities around the world."

"Monsanto is creating organisms that would never occur naturally even through cross-breeding. They're taking a gamble with the environment, with animal and human health."

Despite its protests, Greenpeace has failed to persuade the majority of Midwest farmers to avoid planting and selling Monsanto's RRS.

Experts here also dismiss Greenpeace's fears as unfounded.

Using state-of-the-art equipment, the life sciences center's 1,260 scientists and support personnel are duplicating all types of climate in the world to grow genetically modified plants in 26 rooftop greenhouses and more than 100 "growth chambers."

In the insectary, entymologist Jay Pershing and his colleagues are rearing 12 different types of insect species and studying the feeding habits of the Colorado potato beetle, one of the most damaging insects to U.S. potato growers.

In the next four years, Monsanto plans to commercialize an array of new biotechnology products, including insect and virus-protected potatoes, higher-sugar or higher-solids tomatoes with improved flavor, plants that produce biodegradable plastic and disease-resistant strawberries or wheat.

"Like computers, we'll soon be able to program plants to do unbelievable things ... and everyone in agriculture will benefit as a result," according to Robert Fraley, head of Monsanto's Ceregen Division.

Founded in 1901 to produce saccharine, Monsanto has been involved in the promising field of biotechnology since 1979, spokesman Gary Barton.

Last December, the company, which posted net sales of $9.3 billion in 1996, announced the spin-off of its chemicals business, which would create two separate listed companies in a move that would slash up to 2,500 jobs worldwide.

The first entity, the life sciences group, would cover agriculture, food and pharmaceuticals. The other entity — the $3-billion chemicals group — will continue to focus on nylon and acrylic-fiber products such as carpets and upholstery, safety layers for automotive and architectural glass, and products for coatings and adhesives.

(AFP)



Patterns of Conflict: Civilians Are Now the Target

Civilian fatalities in wartime have climbed from 5 percent at the turn of the century ... to more than 90 percent in the wars of the 1990s.

New weapons and patterns of conflict that include deliberate attacks against civilians are increasingly turning children into primary targets of war.

"Armed conflict kills and maims more children than soldiers", notes a new United Nations report by Graca Machel, the secretary-general's expert on the impact of armed conflict on children.

"It is a basic need of children to be protected when conflicts threaten, and such protection requires the fulfillment of their rights through the implementation of international human rights and humanitarian law", the report states.

Modern warfare is often less a matter of confrontation between professional armies than one of grinding struggles between military and civilians in the same country, or between hostile groups of armed civilians.

More and more wars are essentially low-intensity internal conflicts, and they are lasting longer. The days of set-piece battles between professional soldiers facing off in a field far from town are long gone. Today, wars are fought from apartment windows and in the lanes of villages and suburbs, where distinctions between combatant and non-combatant quickly melt away.

Civilian fatalities in wartime climbed from 5 percent at the turn of the century to 15 percent during the First World War, to 65 percent by the end of the Second World War and to more than 90 percent in the wars of the 1990s.

Children are not spared. It is estimated that 500,000 under-five-year-olds died as a result of armed conflicts in 1992 alone. In Chechnya, between February and May 1995, children made up an appalling 40 percent of all civilian casualties; Red Cross workers found that children's bodies bore marks of having been systematically executed with a bullet through the temple. In Sarajevo in Bosnia and Herzegovina, almost one child in four has been wounded.

"Any and all tactics are employed, from systematic rape, to scorched earth tactics that destroy crops and poison wells, to ethnic cleansing and genocide", the report says.

In war, children usually have little choice but to share the same horrors as their parents. As wars take on an ethnic, tribal or fratricidal cast, civilians and their children may find themselves the objects of genocidal violence. As one political commentator cynically expressed it in a 1994 radio broadcast before violence erupted in Rwanda, "To kill the big rats, you have to kill the little rats."

"Not only are large numbers of children killed and injured, but countless others grow up deprived of their material and emotional needs, including the structures that give meaning to social and cultural life", the report says. "The entire fabric of their societies — their homes, schools, health systems and religious institutions — are torn to pieces."

Even humanitarian activities that were once safe from attack are now treated as legitimate "military objectives". Relief convoys, health clinics and feeding centers have all become targets. And when food supplies run short or water is contaminated during wartime, it is usually children who suffer most. In Somalia, half or more of all children under age five who were alive on January 1, 1992 were dead by the end of the year.

In Mozambique, wartime damage to schools has left two thirds of 2 million primary-school-age children with no access to education.

Sexual abuse is also appearing more often as a systematic policy of war, deployed to terrorize civilian communities. In some raids during the carnage in Rwanda in 1994, virtually every adolescent girl who survived militia attack was later raped.

In Bosnia and Herzegovina, the rape of teenage girls was systematized into a deliberate policy. It has been estimated that more than 20,000 women have been raped since the Balkan war began in 1992.

The technology of war has also changed in ever more deadly ways. Inexpensive new lightweight weapons have made it tragically easy to use children as the cannon-fodder of modern warfare.

In Uganda, an AK-47 — which is simple enough for a child of 10 to strip and reassemble — can be bought for the same price as a chicken, and in Mozambique for a bag of maize. Thanks to such innovations, by the late 1980s adults had put guns in the hands of as many as 200,000 children under the age of 16 in 25 countries. As soldiers, children are often considered the most expendable: during the Iran-Iraq war, child soldiers were sent out ahead in waves over minefields.

What are the causes underlying modern armed conflict, with its emphasis on victimizing children and other civilians? "The sense of dislocation and chaos that characterizes contemporary armed conflicts can be attributed to many different factors", says the report.

"Some observers point to cataclysmic political upheavals and struggles for control over resources in the face of widespread poverty and economic disarray. Others see the callousness of modern warfare as a natural outcome of the social revolutions that have torn traditional societies apart. The latter analysts point as proof to many African societies that have always had strong martial cultures. While fierce in battle, the rules and customs of those societies, only a few generations ago, made it taboo to attack women and children", the report continues.

Even as wars become deadlier for innocent civilians, it is possible to mitigate their effects on children. In El Salvador, for example, beginning in 1985, government and rebel forces agreed to three "days of tranquillity", during which 250,000 small children were immunized against polio, measles, diphtheria, tetanus and whooping cough. This vaccine truce was repeated annually for six years until the end of the civil war.

Similarly, the 1996 Atlanta Olympics inspired UNICEF-brokered truces between warring factions in Afghanistan (3 million children were vaccinated) and in Kurdish areas of northern Iraq (66,000 vaccinated) — a gold-medal success for all sides.

Changing Patterns of Conflict: Key Statistics

Increasingly, wars are fought in precisely those countries that can least afford them. Of more than 150 major conflicts since the Second World War, 130 have been fought in the developing world. The per capita gross national product of war-torn countries in 1994 included: Afghanistan ($280), Angola ($700), Cambodia ($200), Georgia ($580), Liberia ($450), Mozambique ($80), Somalia ($120), Sri Lanka ($640) and the Sudan ($480).

Since the 1950s, more wars have started than have stopped. By the end of 1995, wars had been running in Afghanistan for 17 years; Angola 30; Liberia 6; Somalia 7; Sri Lanka 11; Sudan 12.

The global case-load of refugees and displaced persons is growing at alarming speed. The number of refugees from armed conflicts worldwide increased from 2.4 million in 1974 to more than 27.4 million today, the report notes, with another 30 million people displaced within their own countries. Children and women make up an estimated 80 percent of displaced populations.

(Courtesy UNICEF)



BARIPADA, India: (Feb. 24): Bodies are lined up close by the scene of a horrific fire in Baripada. Around 200 people died in the blaze which tore through a religious ceremony attended by thousands in the eastern Indian town.

(AFP PHOTO)



AMMAN, Jordan (Feb. 23): Jordan's King Hussein welcomes Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Natanyahu at the Royal Palace in Amman. Talks during the visit were expected to focus on Israeli construction plans, particularly a proposal to build the 6,500-home Jewish neighborhood of Har Homa in East Bait-ul-Moqaddas.

(AFP PHOTO)

World to Spotlight "Most Intolerable" Forms of Child Labor

AMSTERDAM — How to eliminate "the most intolerable forms" of child labor, such as prostitution and slavery, will be at the center of talks between government ministers and donor organizations from across the globe at a conference opening here Wednesday.

The spotlight at the two-day talks will fall on the millions of children worldwide caught in the web of prostitution, child-trafficking, slavery, debt bondage and work in dangerous environments and industries that kills an unknown number of youngsters each year.

The International Labor Organization (ILO) and the UN Children's Fund (UNICEF) are expecting ministers from the principal countries concerned — Bangladesh, Brazil, Egypt, India, Kenya, the Philippines, Tanzania and Thailand — to attend along with leading donor groups.

"There are certain types of child labor which are so obnoxious that they ought to be eliminated immediately," ILO spokesman Michel Barton told AFP at its headquarters in Geneva.

"We are calling for mobilization of public awareness," he stressed.

The conference, sponsored by the Dutch government, hopes to underline the daily hell of children, some of them still small, who are forced to work as prostitutes. Some 400,000 to 500,000 children are estimated to be involved in prostitution rings in India and 200,000 in Thailand.

Others toil 14 hours per day in foundries, glassworks or chemical plants where the air is badly polluted, labor in plantations to pay off family debts or are employed as domestic help, like the estimated five million child servants in Indonesia.

Many fail to reach adulthood, though no reliable figures are available on the mortality rate among these children.

Officials however estimate that 120 million children aged between five and 14 are forced to work worldwide, 250 million if after-school work is included.

"This conference is targetting the most intolerable forms of child labor," Barton said. "We believe there is no economic justification whatsoever for these kinds of child labor.

We believe whatever the level of development or under development of that society, no one is so poor it cannot afford to target these practices for immediate eradication."

The issue of child labor hit the international scene little more than five years ago but has already made inroads in the global conscience.

Only this month, Pakistan signed an agreement with the ILO in Geneva to end child labor in its lucrative football industry. Its football-making industry accounts for almost three-quarters of the one-billion-dollar world market and stitching and sewing the balls has long been a job for child laborers.

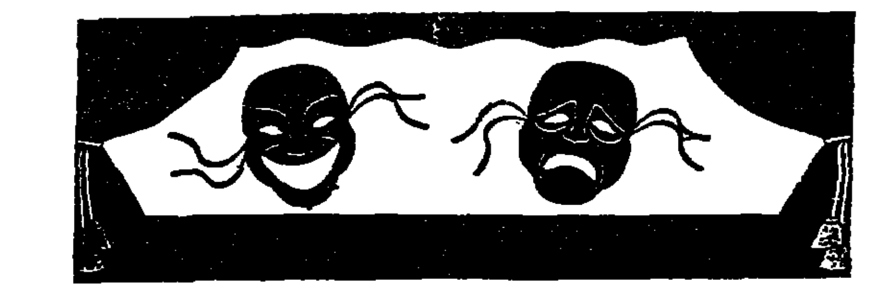
Big sporting goods firms such as Reebok, Nike and Adidas have already moved to cover themselve against accusations of exploiting child labor in developing countries.

"This issue is no run-of-the-mill humanitarian matter," Barton said. "It is a hot economic issue and therefore a hot political issue."

Multinationals and exporter countries now "need to protect themselves against boycotts and consumer movements targetting entire industries."

(AFP)





15th Fajr Theater Festival at a Glance

Tehran Times Service

TEHRAN — The 15th Fajr Theater Festival started its work on Feb. 21 in Tehran. Taking into consideration the latest changes in the menu of the festival and forming different sections including competition, special, and quest sections, indicate that the organizers of the festival are bound to pay much attention to the amateur and township theaters this time.

In this category, therefore, professional theater stands on the sideline of the festival not as a focus of attention as ever before.

The competition section includes 38 plays, 18 of which are from the townships and the other 20 from Tehran. Seven plays are on the menu of the special section and 30 plays fill out the quest section menu.

On the whole, 75 plays are on the menu of the 15th theater festival, all of which will go on stage in 12 theater halls.



Mahaya Petrossian in "Eshqabad" (The Lovelorn)

On the sideline, Street Theater Section, with 12 plays on the menu, gave some outdoor activities to the festival.

Also the second gathering on a Survey of Drama in Iran, attended by Iranian theater experts, was held during the festival.

Elham Pavenezhad (R) and Shahin Alizadeh in "The Era of Innocence"

Of the important plays went on stage on the first day of the festival, we should refer to *Eshqabad* (The Lovelorn), written and directed by Davood Mir Baqeri. Regarding the characteristics of drama in Iran, this play is one of the most attractive plays ever gone on stage during the past recent years. We will have a comprehensive report and critique on this play, once the festival concludes its work.

The other play of the first day, "*Douran-e Bigonahi*" (The Era of Innocence) by Dr. Gotbaddin Sadeghi, narrates the story of three generations in Kurdistan, who have been burdened with great losses during different wars in the course of history. The play drops curtain focusing on the chemical attack of Iraq on Halabcheh.

"*Aahoo, the Girl of the Sun City*", from Yazd written and directed by Sa'id Shahryar, went on stage with the traditional style act and story telling. The play is on the presence and courage of Iranian women in the resistance movements against foreign invaders (Mongols).

And finally, the psychological "*Pargar*" (The Compass), directed by Yadollah Karimi, was another important play went on screen so far.

Interview With Director Mahasti Badi'i

TEHRAN — Cinema director and filmmaker Ms.

Mahasti badi'i said here Tuesday that filmmaking is a tightly demanding profession, one which not everyone is able to handle. She added that it is necessary for women to face up to problems, tackle them and make further success in the field.

Criticizing those who want to move against the trend, she said, "We must respect the system that we ourselves have created and observe its rules and regulations." Drawing a comparison between activities and role of Iranian women engaged in cinema industry before and after the victory of the 1979 Islamic Revolution, the Iranian director told IRNA that before the Islamic Revolution, there was no opportunity and possibility for the female artists who were loyal to Islamic, ethical and moral values.

On the contrary, today any aspiring woman with talent can enter the profession. The road is open to them, she concluded.

(IRNA)



On Aging

In youth, what disappointments of our own making; in age, what disappointments from the nature of things.

EDWARD YOUNG
True Estimate of Human Life

Supplication of Kumayal

(13)

My Allah and my Master! So I ask You
by the power You have apportioned
And the decision which
You have determined and imposed,
and through which
You have overcome him toward
whom it has been put into effect — that
You forgive me in this night and at this hour
every offense I have committed,
every sin I have performed,
every wicked thing I have concealed,
every folly I have enacted
— whether I have hidden it or announced it,
whether I have concealed it or manifested it —
every evil act which You have commanded
the Noble Writers to record,
those whom You have appointed to watch
over every action of mine
and whom You have made,
along with my limbs, witness against me.
And You are Yourself the Watcher
over me from behind them,
and the Witness of what is hidden from them,
but through Your Mercy You concealed it
and through Your Bounty You veiled it.
(And I ask You) that You bestow upon me an
abundant share of every good You send down,
kindness You confer;
goodness You unfold;
provision You spread out;
sin You forgive or error You cover.

What's Spring Festival Like in China?



Lion Dance

Tehran Times Service

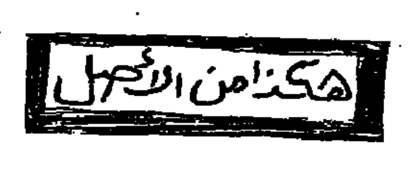
TEHRAN — The Spring Festival is the most important traditional festival with the longest history, the grandest occasion of all Chinese nationalities. All the Chinese officially have three days holiday. It marks the beginning of the lunar year (The date varies from year to year from the later half of January to the first half of February.), hence it is called "*Nian Jie*" or the Year Festival.

The Spring Festival falls in Winter, an agricultural slack season, therefore, people have more time to conduct all kinds of activities. Two weeks before the festival, every household is busy with preparations for the festival. Shops are decorated with lanterns and colorful streamers. Streets are lined with vendors' stalls one after another. People joyously bustle about with the Spring Festival shopping, such as firecrakers for kids...The whole nation is full of festival atmoshphere.

For thousands of years numerous customs have been connected with the Spring Festival. Such as cleaning the house, sticking New Year pictures, pasting Spring Festival couplets on the gate posts or door panels before the Spring Festival, staying up late or all night on the eve of the Spring Festival; family get together supper characterized with large meals and display of fireworks: paying New Year calls; enjoying Chinese dumplings. Dances, dragon dances and stilt-walking, visiting flower markets and so on and so forth.

The highlight of the activities before the New Year concentrates on the Eve of the Spring Festival. Every household will post Spring Festival couplets on gate posts (the Spring Festival couplets were originated from "*Taofu*", peach wood charms against evil, hung on the gate on the lunar New Year's Eve in ancient times, dating back to the Spring and Autumn Period more than 2000 years ago). It is the custom for people to stay up late and set off firecrackers at midnight. The members of a family used to get together to offer sacrifices to the ancestors, family members of the younger generation kowtowed to their elders to celebrate the lunar New Year's Eve while the elders were supposed to give children money as a New Year gift. Then the whole family ate dumplings stuffed with meat (*Jiaozi*). New Year Cake (*Niangao*, made of rice flour) or round sweet dumplings made of glutionous rice flour together. However, the old customs are dy-

(Contd on Pg.14)



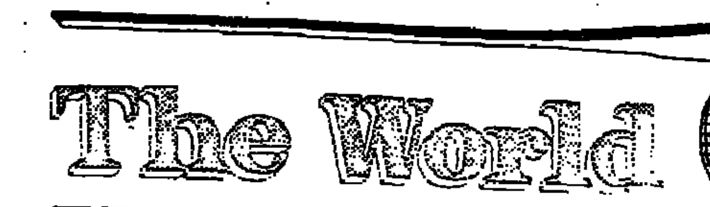
اهکذا من الزکعز

International Spectrum
A Glance at International Events

TEHRAN TIMES
Tehran Times Weekend Issue
THU. FEB. 27, 1997; ESFAND 9, 1375; SHAVAL 19, 1417

Iran Spectrum
A Glance at National Events





WORLD IN HIGHLIGHT

TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 18

31 Killed in Algeria

Activists armed with guns, axes and swords massacred 31 people overnight in a mountain hamlet in northern Algeria.

Hezbollah Warns Israel After Lebanese Woman Killed

A Lebanese woman was killed and two other civilians wounded in Israeli shelling of a village in southern Lebanon.

Wednesday, February 19

Rifkind Calls On European Leaders to "Come Clean" on Greater Unity

British Foreign Secretary Malcolm Rifkind argued forcefully against further European political integration in a major speech in Germany, and called on EU leaders to come out and say what kind of Europe they want.

Japanese Red Army Member Arrested



Kozo Okamoto, the Japanese Red Army member arrested in Lebanon, was the sole survivor among the three Japanese gunmen who killed 26 and wounded 80 in a May 1972 attack on Tel Aviv's Lod Airport.

Alliance Launches Attack on Taleban

Forces loyal to a Shia Muslim faction have attacked the Taleban militia northwest of Afghan capital Kabul.

Israel Orders Demolition of UN Refugee Building

Israel has ordered the demolition of a UN building meant to serve as a school for Palestinian refugees in the West Bank, saying the structure was built without a permit.

THURSDAY, February 20

Deng Xiaoping Dies at 92



China mourned Deng Xiaoping, the man who lifted it from rank poverty to a burgeoning economic superpower, while world leaders paid tribute to him for freeing the world's most populous nation from its socialist shackles. Deng, 92 and in the advanced stages of Parkinson's disease, died of respiratory failure.

Peru Government, Rebels End Fourth Round of Talks

The Peruvian government and Marxist rebels holding 72 hostages ended fourth round of face-to-face talks that lasted nearly 3 1/2 hours at a Red Cross safe house.

Friday, February 21

North Korea to Attend Peace Talks Briefing

North Korea will attend a briefing on proposed four-way peace talks in New York on March 5, a North Korean Foreign Ministry spokesman said.

Serbian Opposition Comes to Power in Belgrade

Serbia's opposition took power in the Belgrade City Assembly for the first time in 50 years, the crowning achievement of three months of street protest against President Slowdown Milosevic.

N.Korea Appoints New Acting Premier

North Korea announced the appointment of Vice Premier Hong Song Nam as the acting premier to replace Kang Song San, one of the most powerful figures in the country's power structure.

New Prime Minister Named in Madagascar

Madagascar's President Didier Ratsiraka named Pascal Rakotomavo as the new prime minister of the large Indian Ocean island republic.

130 Tamil Refugees Drown on Boat to India, Military Plane Crashes

Some 130 Tamil refugees fleeing for neighboring India drowned when their boat capsized shortly before elite troops captured a key highway from rebels in northern Sri Lanka. Meanwhile a military transporter crashed just outside the Sri Lankan capital, killing at least four soldiers and injuring 45.

Saturday, February 22

150 Thousands Cheer New Belgrade Leaders at Rally



About 150,000 demonstrators thronged central Belgrade late into the night to celebrate the end of 50 years of communist and socialist rule in the Serbian capital and to welcome new mayor.

N.Korea Reports Defense Minister Dead

North Korea announced the death of its Defense Minister Choe Kwang, 78.

Rwandans Flee Kalima Refugee Camp

Twenty-five thousand Rwandan refugees fled the Kalima Camp in eastern Zaire less than a week after it opened, amid unconfirmed reports of new fighting in the area.

Taleban Detain Two French Nationals

The Taleban militia detained two Frenchmen working with the French-based humanitarian group Action Contra la Faim.

Sunday, February 23

Tens of Thousand Protest French Government's Immigration Crackdown



The French government prepared for a new parliamentary debate on its tough anti immigration bill after an impressive protest campaign that has embarrassed ministers culminated at the weekend in a mass march by tens of thousand.

Fire in Religious Meet Kills 200 People

More than 200 people were killed in a massive fire in a Hindu religious gathering in Madhuban town in eastern India, at least 500 others were burnt from the fire.

Kalima Falls to Rebels as New Bombing Raids Reported

The town of Kalima and its refugee camp in eastern Zaire fell to rebels, amid reports that dozens had been killed in new air raids against rebel positions.

Yeltsin Ventures Out Beyond the Kremlin Walls

Russian President Boris Yeltsin stage a comeback on the political and diplomatic front, intended at silencing rumors and speculation about his state of health.

Monday, February 24

China Shows Deng Xiaoping to the World

China gave the world its first glimpse of Deng Xiaoping in more than three years when state-run television broadcast footage of his flag-draped body before cremation and prepared to say a final farewell on Tuesday with an official funeral.

Senior Pakistani Official Killed

Two unidentified gunmen riding a motorcycle shot and killed a senior provincial government official in a suspected sectarian attack in Lahore.

IRAN IN HIGHLIGHT

Wednesday, February 19

Social Justice, Key Factor in 25-Year Plan

President Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani said that with its huge natural and vast energy resources, cultural instruments and outstanding geographical position, Iran can be a good supporter for implementation of the new Islamic Civilization Project for the year 1400 Hejira.

Habibi, Stephanopouos Discuss Tehran-Athens Ties

Iranian Vice President Hassan Habibi and Greece's President Costis Stephanopoulos exchanged views on bilateral and regional and international developments during his visit to Athens.

Thursday, February 20

7 Martyred in Attack on Iran's Cultural Center

Armed terrorists of Sipah-i-Sahaba attacked the Iranian Cultural Center in the east central Pakistani city of Multan and killed head of Iran's Cultural Center Seyed Mohammad Ali Rahimi and six local staff members.

Foreign Ministry Summons Pakistani Ambassador

Iran's Foreign Ministry summoned Pakistani Ambassador to Tehran, Khalid Mahmood in protest against the terrorist attack on Iranian Cultural Center and called on Pakistani government to take immediate steps to bring to justice the perpetrators of the savage ac .

Friday, February 21

Tajikistan Peace Talks Wind Up



Tajik President Imomali Rakhmanov and the opposition leader Abdullah Nouri signed a historical peace agreement in the holy city of Mashhad.

Indian FM Arrives in Tehran

Indian Foreign Minister Kumar Gujral arrived in Tehran for the Ninth Commission of Iran-India.

Head of Iran-Azerbaijan Friendship Association Assassinated

President of the Iran-Azerbaijan Friendship association professor Zia Bonyadov was assassinated by unidentified gunmen in Baku.

Saturday, February 22

Iran, India, Turkmenistan Sign Transit Deal

Iran, India and Turkmenistan signed a tripartite transit agreement, facilitating transit of goods and services among them. The tripartite agreement was signed at a ceremony with the participation of the foreign ministers of three countries.

Funeral Service Held for Martyr Rahimi



The body of martyr Seyed Mohammad Ali Rahimi, head of Iran's Cultural Center in Multan, Pakistan, was buried in Tehran.

Sunday, February 23

President Says Iran Expected to Manufacture Airplane Soon

President Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani said despite the dependence on aviation industry and the embargo imposed on Iran, Iran is expected to enter into the arena of manufacturing airplane.

Monday, February 24

State Inspectorate Guarantor of Government Organs Sound Function

The Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyed Ali Khamenei, in a meeting with the officials of the State Inspectorate Office considered careful supervision over the country's different organizations and proper presentation of the problems and shortcomings as the two major duties of the organization and viewed the organization as the guarantor of sound function of the government's different organs.

How to Get Your Husband to Help at Home

This past summer, a typical day for Melissa Swartz, a 33-year-old social worker and full-time college student in Toledo, Ohio, started with her 7:30 a.m. dash to get 13-year-old Danielle to band practice. The rush didn't end until 10 p.m., after her last class. She was exhausted and frustrated. She couldn't get her husband, Mike, to help with household chores.

"He knows if he stalls long enough, I'll do them," she says. Mike, 32, a busy architect, just wishes she would get off his back. "I try to keep things at an even keel. At times I may slack off, but I think I do my fair share."

As women entered the work force in record numbers in the 1970s, experts thought men, from necessity, would do more around the house. But that hasn't been the case. A national study of 2528 mothers in 1993 found that among dual-income couples, the woman contributes two-thirds of the total family time spent on housework.

"While women are working more outside the home, they are not necessarily working less inside the home," notes Michael Leeds of Temple University in Philadelphia, an economist who has studied how husbands and wives divide up household responsibilities. He discovered that more than half of the husbands spent five hours or less each week doing housework; 15 percent did none at all. Meanwhile, nearly half the wives did more than 20 hours of housework a week.

What's in It for Him? While it is obvious why a wife would want a more equal chore load, why would a man willingly take on more of such unrewarding work? The truth is that men benefit greatly from sharing household chores.

Marriage spark. Explains Boulder, Colo., psychologist Evelyn Bassoff, "In the course of protecting, nurturing, worrying about, disciplining and rejoicing in spouse is often difficult, but here are some tips to help establish a more harmonious partnership:

Stop nagging. Nagging brings out the worst in everybody. "It makes me feel like the Wicked Witch of the West," admits Melissa Swartz.

"Equals make requests, not demands or accusations," says Karen Blaisure, a psychologist at Western Michigan University in Kalamazoo. Instead of "Are you blind? Can't you see those stacks of laundry?" or "You always duck out and leave me with the work," Blaisure suggests some thing more specific, such as, "I want us to take turns with the laundry."

Spell it out. Some women hope their husbands will pick up on a loud sigh over an unmade bed or a door slammed on a messy room. "That's the fantasy of mental telepathy," says Georgia Witkin, professor of psychology at New York's Mount Sinai School of Medicine. "But people can't know what you want until you tell them. it's that simple."

You both work, but only one of you cleans house. How can you even the load?

Compromise. "Negotiate a package that both can live with or it's not going to work," says Pennsylvania State sociology Professor Alan Booth.

Karen Clark, a computer consultant in Knoxville, Tenn., gets frustrated when she comes home to find peanut butter smeared on the kitchen counter. Her husband, Brooks, feels that there are more important things than an immaculate house. "I would not trade a single minute playing baseball with my daughter for all the folded napkins in Martha Stewart's warehouse," he declares.

To get out of this impasse, the Clarks try to maintain a minimum standard they both can agree on. Karen divides cleaning into three categories: Important, Sort of Important and Dreamland. Brooks has promised to help stay on top of the Important jobs, and Karen is forcing herself not to get crazy their children, husband and wife are drawn into a daily intimacy from which a strong marital love can grow."

After Colette and Ron Sherouse of Los Angeles had a daughter, Rebecca, everything to do with the baby or the house automatically became Colette's job. "For a year I walked around angry, which is not great on a marriage," she confesses. Then Ron began sharing the chores. "We're real partners again," he says. "Our marriage and life are much better because neither one is taken for granted."

Child care can be especially rewarding. "It's an emotional roller coaster – joy one moment, frustration the next," says Reb Cole, a highschool chemistry teacher in Mohegan Lake, N.Y. "But before, fathers weren't even on for the ride."

Better health. "Couples should be fighting over who *gets* to mow the lawn," says psychologist Catherine Chambliss of Ursinus College in Pennsylvania. "It is a great cardiovascular workout."

Desperate for exercise that wouldn't exacerbate his knee problem, teacher Marty Kaminsky of Ithaca, N.Y., took over the housecleaning. His wife, Martha, was skeptical at first, but he's been scrubbing and vacuuming now for two years. "I blast tapes on my Walkman and get into a good rhythm," he says. "I can work up a sweat just mopping the floor."

Have it your way. San Diego police sergeant Steven Moss realized how much he enjoyed cooking after he did more of it for his police captain wife and three children. "It's relaxing, creative and I can make whatever I want," he says.



Dan Kent of Atlanta cleans the bathrooms and vacuums the house because he likes them done his way. "Maybe it comes from being a lawyer, but I get very particular."

Surprise! It Works. Dividing up household chores with your over the Dreamland ones.

Back off. Many women say they want their husbands to take responsibility, but then have trouble letting go. When my husband took over the checkbook, a chore I'd always done, I would hang over his shoulder and say, "That's not the right way!" Some part of me truly believed that this mature, intelligent man would let us go to wrack and ruin if I didn't direct his every move.

I shouldn't have been surprised that Bill's enthusiasm waned. Finally, he sat me down and said, "If you want me to do this, BACK OFF."

Now that the job is truly his, Bill takes full responsibility. And guess what? No checks have bounced and no creditors come calling. In fact, his system makes more sense than mine.

Quit the "don't know how" game. "I never learned how to go to the grocery store," Harry Crowe, an interior landscaper in Dallas, tells his wife, Caroline.

How to get around the incompetency defense? Don't play into it. When he turns the laundry pink, let him wear pink underwear. "If he can program a VCR or fix a car, there is no reason he can't work a household appliance," notes Scott Coltrane, a sociologist at University of California, Riverside.

Adapt. When trying to resolve the chore wars, look at the total picture -- not just vacuuming, child care and yardwork, but the "invisible" chores such as remembering family birthdays, arranging social outings, coaching soccer. Who takes care of the car? The garden? "When a couple swaps lists of everything each did that week, they can be amazed at how much the other accomplished. Sometimes they see things are more fair than they realized," says Chambliss.

Say "thank you." Every weekend Jon Levine, a university professor, makes a special pancake breakfast for his wife, Claudia Cryer, and their three children. "One weekend I watched him as he flipped the pancakes and entertained the kids, and it struck me that, as hard as I work in the house, he puts in a lot of effort too," Cryer says. "Now I make it a point to thank him, and get the kids to show appreciation too."

Recognizing each other's efforts is a key factor in forging happy working relationships. In the final analysis, the division of labor doesn't have to be exactly equal. Says Gary Kiger, head of the Sociology Department at Utah State University in Logan, "What matters is that neither side feels taken advantage of or unappreciated."

(Courtesy the Reader's Digest)

Entertaining In Style



Fried Sardine Sandwiches

You will need ...
- 8 large slices white bread
- 1 tablespoon peanut butter
- 1 $4\frac{3}{8}$ oz. can sardines
- 4 eggs 10 minutes
- $\frac{1}{4}$ pint milk
- salt and pepper to taste
- 2 oz. butter or margarine
- watercress

Preparation time
10 minutes

Cooking time
10 minutes

Remove crusts from the bread. Blend peanut butter with oil from the sardines and use to spread the bread. Mash sardines and spread on 4 of the slices.

Beat up 2 of the eggs, stir in 2 tablespoons milk. Season to taste. Melt 1 oz. butter, stir in eggs and scramble. Cool slightly. Spread over the sardine mixture. Press the other 4 slices in place firmly. Beat up the other 2 eggs with the rest of the milk. Pour into a soup plate and dip the sandwiches in this mixture *(see Quick Tip below)*. Heat remaining butter in a frying pan and quickly fry the sandwiches on both sides until golden brown.
Serve each sandwich decorated with washed watercress.

Serves 4.

QUICK TIP

To coat sandwiches in egg: pour well beaten egg on plate. Dip sandwiches on each side by using tongs. Hold up and allow to drain before placing in frying pan. A little milk added to the egg will make it go further.



Criss-Cross

Can you fit all the listed words into their correct places in the grid? We've entered one word to give you a start.

FAIL

4 Letters EDGE, ESPY, ~~FAIL~~, LASH, LIMP, MOAT, NOOK, ONUS, PREY, QUAY, ROOK, WEAN, WEAR.
5 Letters ENSUE, GRACE, NAVAL, OVINE, QUART, SCANT, SLAVE, THYME.
6 Letters ACIDIC, AILING, BREATH, DANGER, ENLIST, FARROW, HELMET, INTEND, JARGON, LATENT, LEEWAY, MARINE, NEURON, SIGNOR, SLEUTH, TAILOR.
7 Letters ANODYNE, BRAKING, CHARTER, PROVOST, RESCIND.
8 Letters APPEASED, DANDRUFF, DEFECTED, DONATION, INFERIOR, RENEGADE, SENILITY, THEOLOGY, TRESPASS.
9 Letters TRANSLATE, VISUALISE
10 Letters ACCEPTANCE, ESCARPMENT, NORTHERNER, WITCHCRAFT.
11 Letters CONTRAPTION, REVALUATION.
12 Letters MELODRAMATIC.



Feature

Facets of Countries

Spotlight: Thailand

Bridging the Urban-Rural Gap Via Technology

As Thailand moves one year closer to the new millennium heads are turning toward a new phase of national development. The country, with an exceptionally bubbling economy, nonetheless remains at a strange crossroads between the First and Third Worlds.

A day trip from Bangkok to the northeast provides a graphic illustration of the effects of uneven industrialization. Over the course of a four-hour drive, the capital's gleaming skyscrapers are left a world away brutally replaced by rural Isarn's dry villages.

Confronted with this reality, the development industry in Thailand is now collectively opening its eyes and scratching its head. Democratizing technology makes for a good sound byte, but can technology ever really become accessible to the rural poor?

Indeed it can, according to Silvio Tavares, an Angolan who is currently working as a strategic product manager for the American telecom giant, AT & T.

Tavares recently pointed to the new internationalism of market-driven economic strategies as a means to solve this development dilemma. Telecommunications are poised to provide the tools that rural people need to bridge the urban-rural gap in developing countries and it is up to private sector initiatives to turn this vision into reality.

"To my mind, the private sector should be the lead partner in development efforts," said Tavares. "The plus sector should play only a limited role in development, and the government should only step in when it is clear that market forces cannot do the job."

Observing the Thai situation from his position in the U.S., Tavares applanded new Thai initiatives to look toward other developing nations for innovative ideas in development. Although Thailand has a history of successfully marrying Western influences with distinctly Thai ideas, new attention being accorded non-Western development ideas is both innovative and practical.

Of specific interest to Tavares is a new partnership between Thailand's private sector and WorldSpace, an international venture striving to bring telecommmications to education efforts in rural Thailand.

"The realm of telecommmications is one of those rare and powerful tools which policy makers can use to bridge the gap between rural and urban areas," Tavares explained.

While the Thai government Non-Formal Education Department has also begun to explore the possibilities for satellite communication and remote education in rural areas, the WorldSpace partnership offers a means to jump start the process past government red tape. WorldSpace has already negotiated experimental educational broadcasting efforts in countries across Africa, the Middle East and Latin America.

"That is what telecommunications is all about--using technology to conquer the difficulties of transportation and communcation across the great distances between the city and the farm," Tavares commented. "In essence, this means blurring the line between the city and the farm and creating a virtual community."

While certainly an optimist, Tavares is no lofty idealist. He has already developed one U.S. patent for his work in Internet Technology, and he has very practical plans for democratizing technology within the context of uneven development.

"In Africa, my goal is to use telecommunications to permit the majority rural population to be more productive, both economically and socially," Tavares said. "The combination of cellular and solar technology can be used to provide villages with self-sustaining communications centers at very low cost. A solar collector plus battery costs less than $100, and a hand-held video phone costs about $200. Through these centers, villages can have 124-hour access to multimedia medical information, educational information, political information and weather patterns."



A rural area in northern Thailand.

Of direct and immediate economic impact, these tools provide the means to coordinate directly contributive economic activities. According Tavares, the market coordination for the selling or purchasing of crops and other goods is one such activity which can be realized cheaply and practically through these tools.

WorldSpace which is headed by the former chief of the International Telecommunications Union (ITU), Richard Butler, is working toward this same goal. Because education is a cornerstone of development, WorldSpace application of telecommunication technologies to this arena represents a long-term investment in the economic and social future of developing nations.

This focus on the private sector as the motor of development implies a new concept and definiton of development itself, away from outdated ideas of foreign-ascribed models and toward natural market-driven economic strategies.

"The government needs to step in to guarantee that the capitalists won't lose their shirts if they risk billions to provide socially useful goods like roads or sewers," explained Tavares. "The government may also need to step in when there is no economic incentive for providing a socially desirable good."

Beyond these duties, however, government efforts should be replaced by entrepreneurs who can render development a basic economic process, rather than a political decree.

In line with this new definition, not only are Thai firms sponsoring limited-term "projects" in villages throughout the country, but entrepreneurs are moving towards structural development of all types to enhance Thailand's ability to ensure sustainable human development for all Thai people.

Thailand has only just began to look to other developing nations for new strategies to make technology accessible to its diverse populace. What has already become clear, however, is that globalization offers interested entrepreneurs the opportunity to tap into a wealth of unexplored technological possibilities for Thailand, and for developing nations throughout the world. *(Courtesy of Business Day, January 9, 1997.)*

Fascinating Facts

Research Reveals a More Sinister Side to the Lovable Penguin

Research is starting to reveal some surprising and at times unsavory secrets about penguins, those elegantly feathered symbols of Antarctica.

They steal each others' eggs and come close to pecking each other to death to defend their territory at remote, windswept nesting sites like tiny Torgersen Island. The new research also suggests penguins' pugnacity at their nesting sites could be linked to testosterone, the male hormone that rages through penguin blood early in the mating season and which, in humans, is popularly associated with aggressive behavior.

The difference is that in penguins hormonal secretions are all calibrated by natural selection to give the birds' fluffy, gray offspring the best possible chance at surviving in a harsh environment, researchers say.

"The thing that most impresses me about the penguins is how attached they are to their young and to their nesting sites," said Carol Vleck, an Iowa State University zoologist.

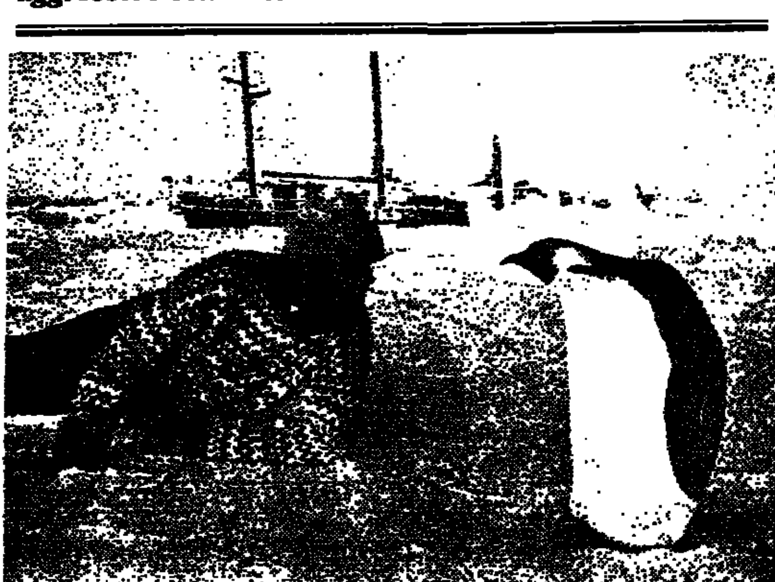
Blood samples from Adelie penguins taken by Vleck hint at a hormonal drive behind the eccentric, at times violent, behavior of penguins early in their breeding cycle, followed by a more nurturing phase when chicks hatch and testosterone levels crash.

"It's extraordinary to see how much personality they have," Vleck said, standing among hundreds of jabbering wide-eyed penguins on the island near the U.S. National Science Foundation's Palmer Station research site. "They make a sudden shift from aggression and defending their territory early in the breeding season to raising and nurturing their chicks later on. And you can see hormonal changes behind that shift."

The Iowa State study is one of several on little-understood aspects of penguins, who are notoriously hard to study because they spend most of their lives at sea and breed in a tough climate. Recent research into another species, the Emperor penguin, has shown that males incubate the eggs for nine weeks in temperatures ranging down to -60 C during winter and the penguins can dive down to 2,070 feet (630 meters), making them possibly the world's deepest-diving birds.

The Adelie penguin's breeding cycle starts in October, when the winter ice pack starts melting and the male and female come ashore to court and stake out territory.

"Penguins' aggressiveness could be linked to testosterone, the male hormone which rages through their blood and which, in humans, is popularly associated with aggressive behavior."



Studies of penguin populations could give crucial data into climate changes in Antarctica.

The female lays two tennis-ball sixed eggs in a nest made of pebbles and heads out along to the open sea to fatten up on krill, a shrimp-like crustacean.

The male, meanwhile, stays at home to keep the eggs warm and protect them from skuas, hawk-like birds that terrorize nesting sites. When the female returns, the male, who has been fasting for up to a month, leaves to feed and the two then alternate every couple of days in incubating the eggs until the chicks hatch by late December. By March, when winter starts its onslaught, the young are ready to fend for themselves.

The penguins' few months on land, when daylight lasts about 22 hours and food is abundant, give researchers a brief look at how they live and interact, not always in a positive way.

Penguins have been known to steal eggs from their neighbors or usurp another's nest, take over the chick and raise it--odd behavior since "it makes no evolutionary sense at all," Vleck said. Males and females constantly defend their territory or try to expand it at neighbors' expense, sometime violently.

Vleck once saw penguins peck a neighbor nearly to death to try to carve out more nesting territory. One of the attacking birds was found to have unusually high levels of testosterone.

Penguin parents cannot leave their offspring alone for a second lest they be eaten by skuas or their territory swiped by neighbors. They nest in extremely close quarters, apparently because a closer concentration makes it harder for flying predators to grab eggs and chicks. A 50-yard (or meter) square plot can have hundreds of nesting pairs and there is fierce competition among penguins for the best sites.

Not all penguins manage to find a mate. Those that do not "just kind of wander around looking forlorn," while others make a nest and go through all the motions of incubating eggs even though there are none, a practice that "could be some kind of practice for next year," Vleck said.

She sees all this behavior as part of a kind of internal programing to raise young, a genetic automatic pilot that keeps them sitting on the nest for days even if the eggs have been eaten by a skua or stolen by a neighbor. She and her research team draw blood from about 300 penguins each season, catching them with nets and drawing bright-red blood from the bird's neck.

Studies of penguin populations could give crucial data into climate changes in Antarctica. For example, a decline in Adelie penguins and an increase in another species, the Chinstrap, could be an indirect result of a slight warming in the Antarctic over the past 30 years, said William Fraser, an ecologist from Montana State University and chief scientist at Palmer Station.

Adelie penguins prefer to spend the winter on pack ice, which has become scarcer as the climate warms, while Chinstraps prefer open water, potentially giving them an advantage in the race for food, he said. *(Courtesy of Business Day, January 9, 1997.)*

TODAY IN HISTORY

1989 - Yugoslavia Imposes emergency measures in strike-torn southern province of Kosovo.

1991 - President Bush announces a cessation of offensive military action and outlines conditions that would lead to a cease-fire if met by Iraq.

1992 - A bomb explodes at one of London's busiest train stations, injuring 28 people. Irish Republic Army blamed.

1993 - Clinton administration delivers a blunt message to its major economic allies, telling them that the United States is putting its house in order and they must do the same.

1994 - A bomb explodes in a packed Maronite Catholic church in Lebanon, killing nine worshipers and wounding at least 60 as they lined up at the altar to take communion.

1995 - Baring Brothers and Co., one of Britain's oldest and most prestigious investment banks, goes broke when a trader loses more than $800 million gambling in Asian futures markets.

1996 - The United Nations suspends sanctions against the Bosnian Serbs after NATO verifies that Serb forces had withdrawn from buffer zones.

CANDID CAMERA



Short Story

Getting Known

By: D. H. Barber

The latest book of my poems has not been selling very well -- in fact 122 of my personal friends and relations tell me they've bought it, but the publishers say only 84 copies have been sold. So the general public seem to have received it rather coldly.

"The trouble is," said Edith, "that nobody has ever heard of you; and those who have heard of you don't want to again. What you need is a little advertisement. Let people know that you exist and that you write poetry, and they will all rush along to the libraries and ask for your latest book."

"But I can't just put an advertisement in the newspaper saying I'm a poet."

Edith though for a moment and then said that she had a bright idea.

"Why not put an advertisement in *The Times*," she said, "saying that you recommend as butler in a small family a man who has been in your employment for 20 years?"

"But I haven't' had anybody in my employment for twenty years," I said. "And I've never kept a butler of any sort, as you know very well. And how could I sell more copies of my poems by pretending that I wanted to find work for a non-existent butler who hasn't been in my employment for 20 years?"

"You're not very bright this morning," said Edith. "Don't you know that the most successful sort of advertisement is the sort that doesn't look like and advertisement? You ought to do something like this."

She got a piece of paper and a pen and wrote the following:

Mr. L. Conkleshill, the poet (author of *Raspberry Bushes and Other Poems*) strongly recommends as butler in a small family his present head man, who has been with him for 20 years."

"The idea is not bad," I said, "but I refuse to do anything so dishonest. And if the plan didn't work, it would mean money thrown away. I won't do it myself, and moreover I absolutely forbid *you* to do it..."

As a matter of fact I secretly rather liked the idea; and I thought that when I absolutely forbade Edith to do it, she would pay the money herself and send in the advertisement. I could then speak to her severely about disobeying my orders, save my money and sell more books.

For some days, however, she did nothing, although I was careful to keep reminding her that I had absolutely forbidden her to send in the advertisement.

"I expect to be obeyed in such matters," I said several times a day. Nearly always this sort of treatment produces the desired effect, but you can never depend on a woman. Although I looked in *The Times* every morning, the advertisement didn't appear. Edith went away to stay with a sick aunt, and I forgot all about the matter.

Then came the event of The Man With the Dog.

He was a big man, and the dog was a big dog, and they both stood outside the front door and made noises at me.

"I'll take the money now," said the man in a bad-tempered voice.

"What money is this?" I said politely. "Something due for milk supplied?"

"Nonsense," said the man. "Two pounds I want for the dog."

"I don't want a dog," I said uncertainly. Ours was a lonely sort of road, and the man was a big sort of man, and it would perhaps be wiser to buy the dog.

"Don't *want* the dog!" said the man in an unpleasant voice. "You calmly let me come here all the way from Hampstead with this cursed dog, and then tell me that you don't *want* him..."

At last I bought the dog for thirty shillings. I was weak, perhaps, but Edith had been saying for a long time that we ought to have a dog. In any case, I was in the middle of writing a poem, and if the man had knocked me down I shouldn't have been able to catch the five o'clock post.

I gave the dog some meat and locked him in the kitchen, and went back to my poem. Then the bell rang again, and I found two men on the step, both with large dogs.

This time I didn't argue. I just shut the door and went and looked at myself in the glass. I was worried. Were the dogs real? I went up to my bedroom and looked down the long road that leads to the station. I could see six men with six dogs.

Then the solution of the problem came to me, and I looked at the *Lost and Found* advertisements in *The Times*.

Mr. L. Conkleshill offers 2 pounds reward for the return of his faithful, dog Ogo, who first awakened the ideas in *Faithful Eyes* in his new book of poems."

Edith said afterwards that I hadn't told her she mustn't put in an advertisement about a *dog*.

TOMORROW IN HISTORY

1987 - Philippines President Corazon Aquino announces "full and complete amnesty" to communist rebels who lay down their arms.

1989 - Israeli warplanes rocket Palestinian activists bases in Chouf Mountains east of Beirut.

1990 - Soviet Legislature passes landmark law allowing citizens to acquire land and bequeath it to their children.

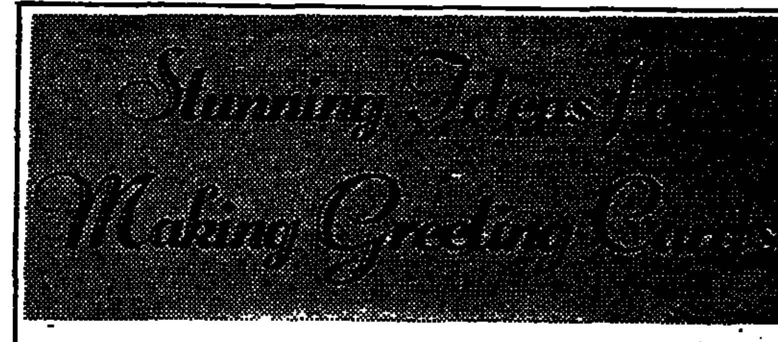
1991 - Allied and Iraqi forces suspend attacks and Iraq pledges to accept all UN resolutions on Kuwait, as it orders its forces to stop fighting.

1992 - UN Security Council approves 22,000-member peacekeeping force for Cambodia.

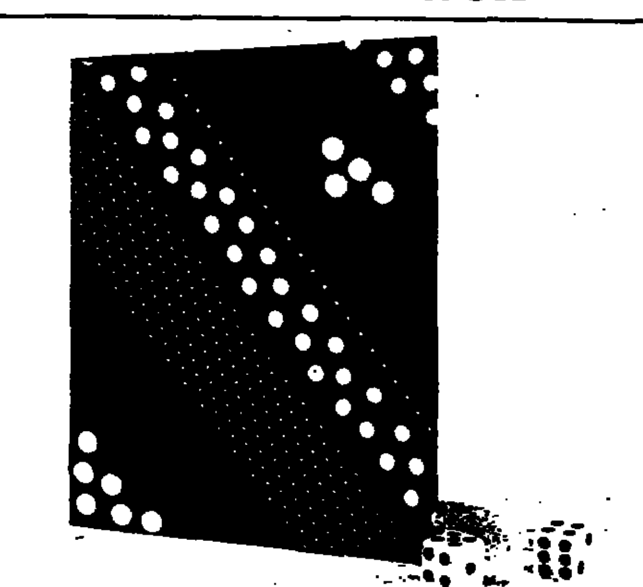
1994 - U.S. jets down four Serb warplanes in Bosnia, NATO's first air attack in the war.

1995 - Rebels attack government positions in northwestern Bosnia, blocking a UN aid convoy and threatening to cut off a main government supply line.

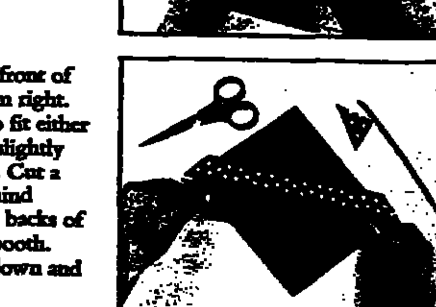
1996 - Daiwa Bank Ltd. of Japan agrees to plead guilty to a criminal cover-up of $1.1 billion in bond-trading losses and pay $340 million in fines, settling one of history's biggest banking frauds.

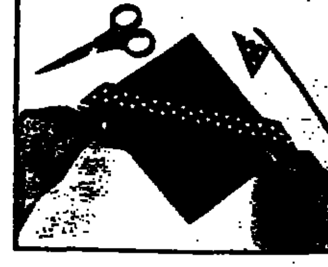


BLACK AND WHITE SPOTS

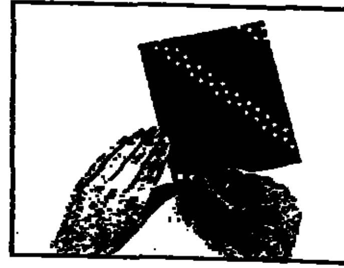


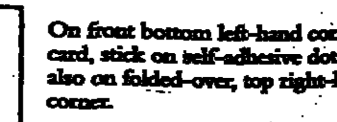
Diagonal lines of spotted ribbon and self-adhesive labels give this card a 'dotty' air. Cut a piece of black card 25 by 16cm (10 by 6¼in). Score and fold 12.5cm (5in). On inside top left-hand corner measure 4cm (1½in) along top of card and down side edge, mark with dots and score. Fold corner back to outside of card.

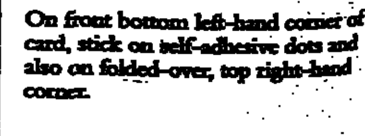




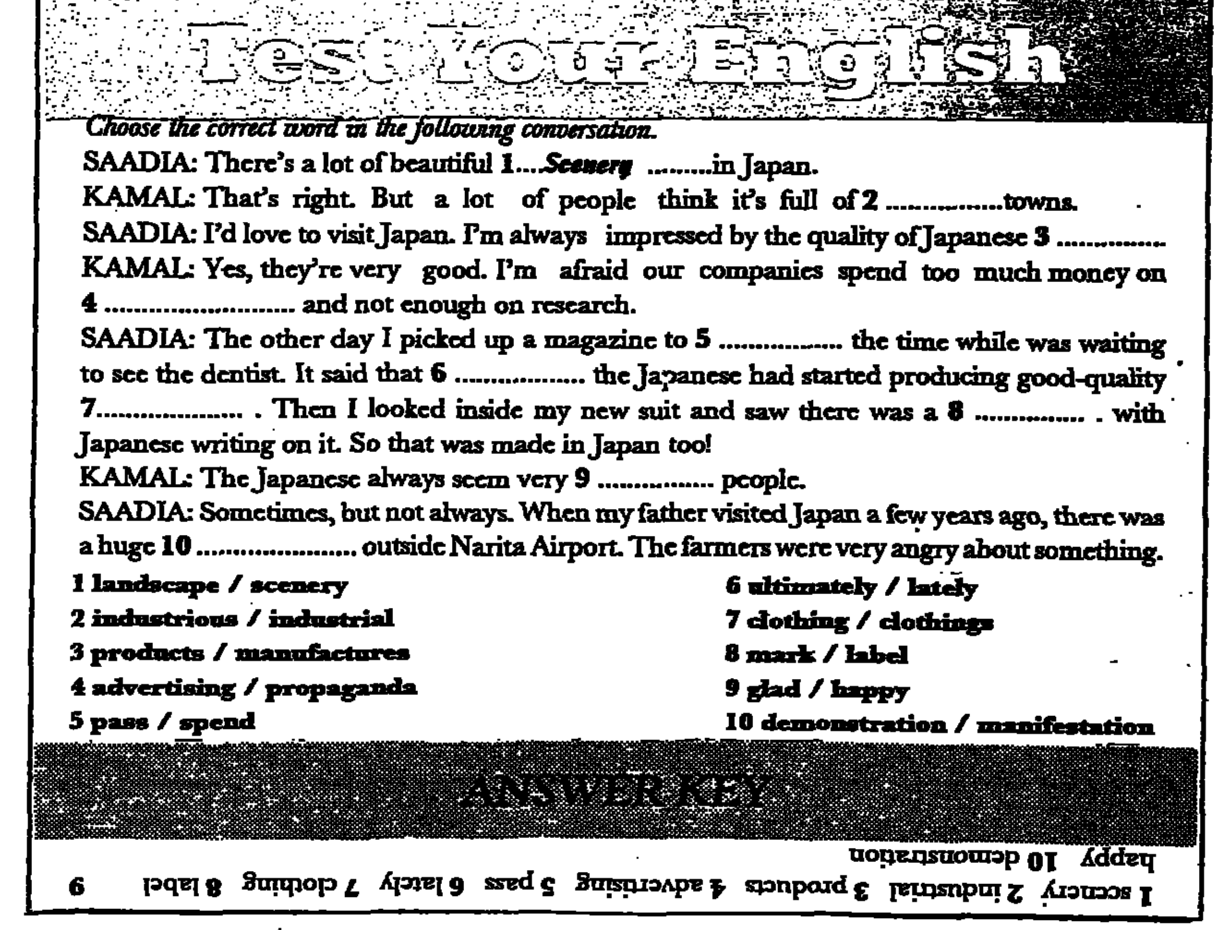
Rule a diagonal line across front of card from top left to bottom right. Measure and cut ribbons to fit either side of this line. Cut them slightly longer, to be trimmed later. Cut a triangle of ribbon to fit behind turned-down corner. Spray backs of ribbon with glue in spray booth. Place in position, smooth down and trim edges.







On front bottom left-hand corner of card, stick on self-adhesive dots and also on folded-over, top right-hand corner.



Test Your English

Choose the correct word in the following conversation.

SAADIA: There's a lot of beautiful **1**....***Scenery*** ....in Japan.

KAMAL: That's right. But a lot of people think it's full of **2** ....towns.

SAADIA: I'd love to visit Japan. I'm always impressed by the quality of Japanese **3** ....

KAMAL: Yes, they're very good. I'm afraid our companies spend too much money on **4** .... and not enough on research.

SAADIA: The other day I picked up a magazine to **5** .... the time while was waiting to see the dentist. It said that **6** .... the Japanese had started producing good-quality **7**.................... . Then I looked inside my new suit and saw there was a **8** .... with Japanese writing on it. So that was made in Japan too!

KAMAL: The Japanese always seem very **9** .... people.

SAADIA: Sometimes, but not always. When my father visited Japan a few years ago, there was a huge **10** .... outside Narita Airport. The farmers were very angry about something.

1 landscape / scenery
2 industrious / industrial
3 products / manufactures
4 advertising / propaganda
5 pass / spend
6 ultimately / lately
7 clothing / clothings
8 mark / label
9 glad / happy
10 demonstration / manifestation

ANSWER KEY

1 scenery 2 industrial 3 products 4 advertising 5 pass 6 lately 7 clothing 8 label 9 happy 10 demonstration

